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COMMODORE USER

Nº1 For AMIGA GAMES

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WIN A DAY OUT WITH THE RED ARROWS

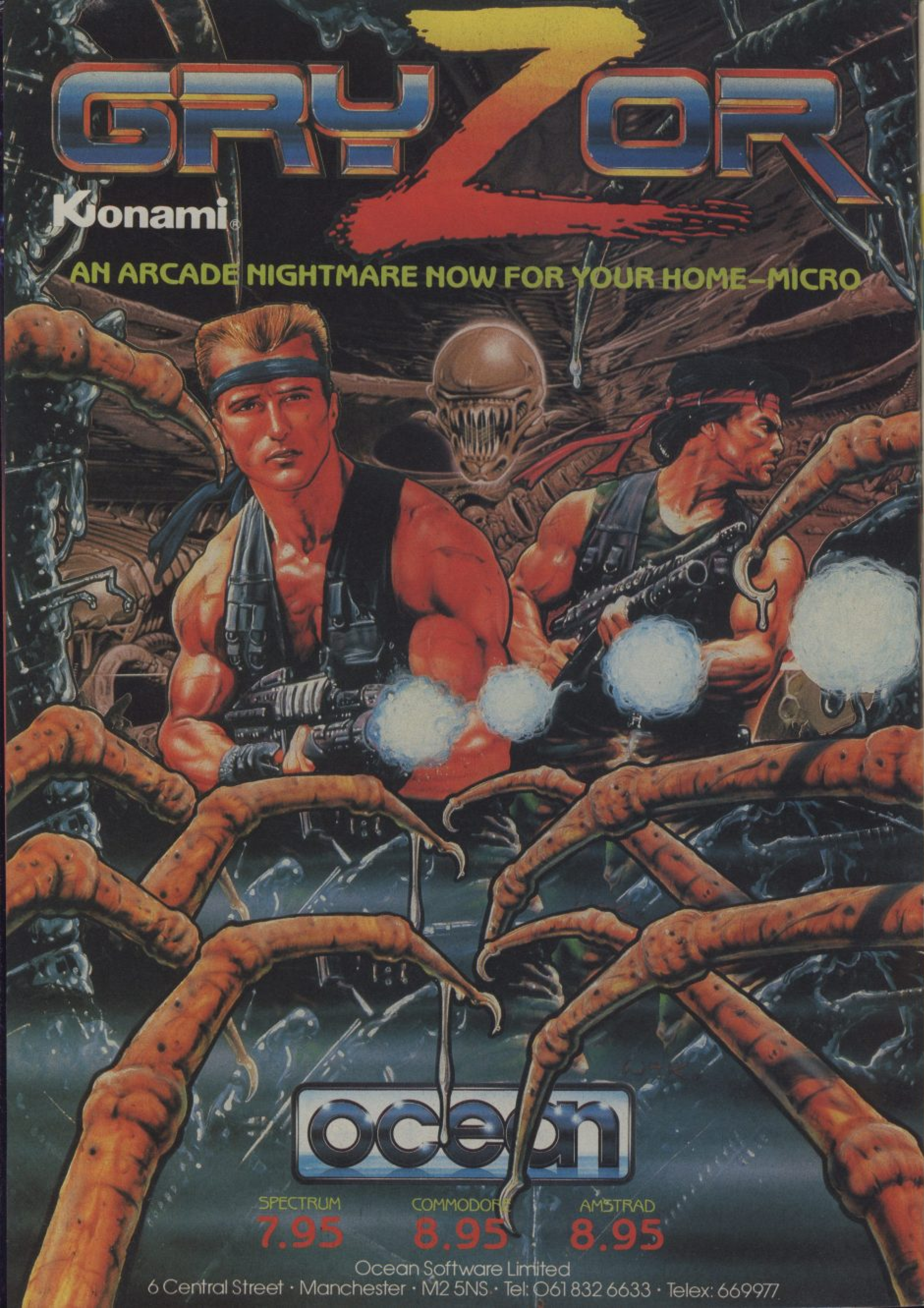
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720°
FLYING SHARK
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REVIEWED
CHUCK YEAGER'S FLIGHT SIM
INDIANA JONES
SUPER SPRINT
SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT


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CONTENTS



NOVEMBER

▲ A CU Superstar — *International Karate +*.

SPECIALS





ED'S BIT ON THE SIDE

You will notice some new names in this month's CU. Not totally new, though, as our two new reviewers are well-known writers and you will have read their reviews in *Zzap* and *Popular Computing Weekly*. From the magazine beginning with the letter 'Z' we welcome Gary Penn and from *Popular Computing Weekly* we welcome Christina Erskine. Also joining the team is another girlie reviewer — one Tina Milan. You have to be good to join The CU review team — and I am sure you will not find these reviewers lacking in any way. You, too, could one day join the elite corps of CU reviewers by entering our Join The CU Crew Compo. All you have to do is review our Cool Spool giveaway tape. Check it out on page 16. That gets the formalities over with and leaves me just enough space to tell you some excellent games are beginning to arrive at the CU offices. We are expanding Screen Scene this month and next to cope with them all — so get reading.

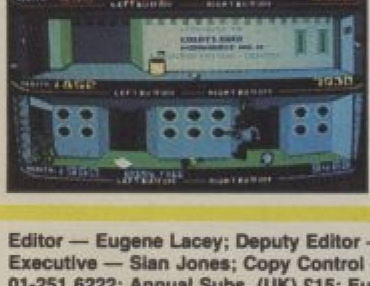
REGULARS



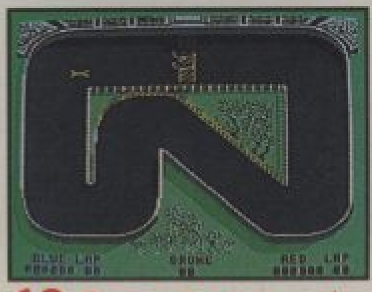


Impact — the review.

Xenophobe-ia in the Arcades.



SCREEN SCENE









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64,606

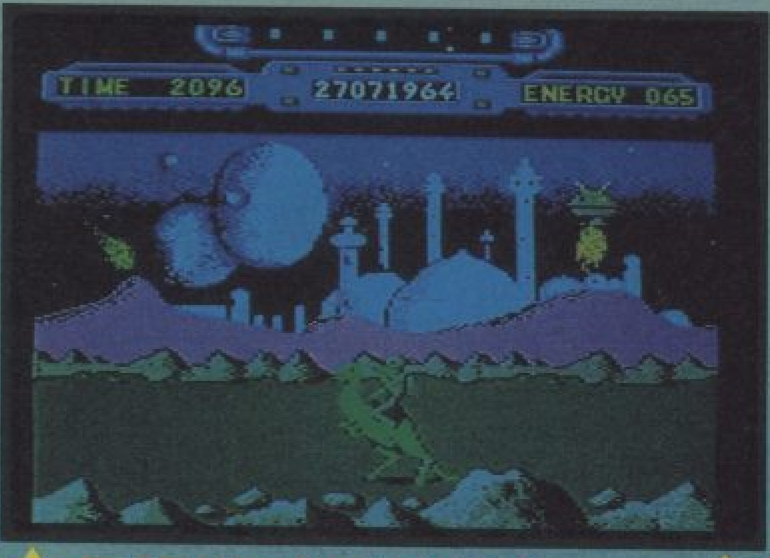
Jan-Jun 1987.

BUZZ

SKATE OR DIE

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, you fools, it's Mike "Finger Flip" Pattenden and about half the population of the universe fooling about on skateboards. But what about those of us who prefer to preserve our necks in case we may need them at some point in the future? Are we destined to spend our days surveying all the fun from a safe distance? No, indeed! For those thoughtful software houses have all been getting their heads together to bring armchair skateboarding to we, the great unwashed. You already know about US Gold's fab coin-op conversion. *720°* (featured on the megabrill free preview cassette adorning the front cover of this very ish). And now please welcome, all the way from Electronic Arts, *Skate Or Die*, a corker of a skateboard sim due to hit the streets in December. In *SOD* you can enter five different competitions, three based on real life professional events (Ramp Freestyle, Downhill Race and Ramp Hill Jump), and two rather more zany ones, Pool Jousting and Inner City Downhill Battle. Roll on Christmas, we say!



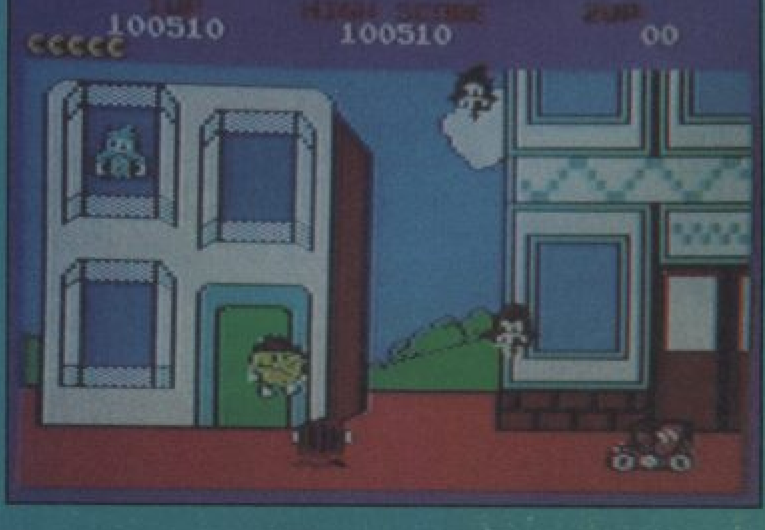


RIMRUNNER

No rest for the talented, it seems. Hardly has the applause for his masterful if gory beat 'em up *Barbarian* died away than Palace's Steve Brown is once more demanding your attention. By all accounts, a considerable volume of midnight oil has gone into the development of *Rimrunner*, and, having been treated to a personal preview, *BUZZ* has a sneaking suspicion that it has not been in vain. Stunning graphics, a tremendous soundtrack and, of course, plenty of samples of Steve's rather offbeat sense of humour (remember *Barbarian's* chortling, head-kicking gremlin?) are to be expected in this charming spaceage shoot 'em up in which you play a small ant-like creature entrusted with the job of patrolling the outer perimeters of a space-city astride your faithful dinosaur steed. *Rimrunner* should be on the shelves towards the end of this month.

PACLAND

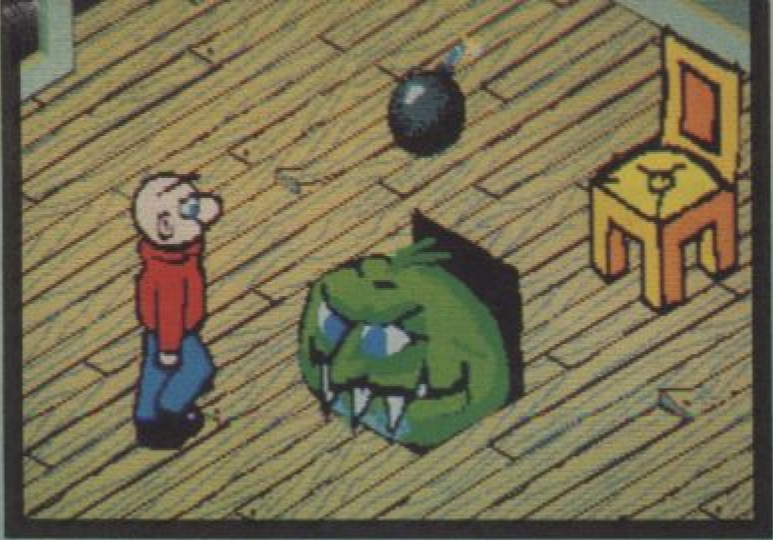
What with the merry jingle of sleigh bells and hard-earned pennies filling the air, it's no wonder that the software houses are falling over themselves to draw your attention to their respective coin-op licenses. Inevitably, it's the previous twelve months' state-of-the-art biggies, yer *Outruns*, *Rastan Sagas* and *Flying Sharks* that draw the most attention (and, no doubt, most of the software houses' licence acquisition budgets). But this year's pre-Christmas signings also include a few older arcade favourites, humbler and less hyped than their glamorous competitors for your yuletide dosh, but with simple proven playability which may well be tickling your fancy long after the bigger names have faded from your memory. Firebird's *Bubble Bobble* certainly looks set to be a surprise hit, and we wouldn't be a bit surprised if Argus Software's *Pacland* followed suit. Complete with meanies, power pills, floating fruit, magic shoes and, of course, Pacman and his family, this 64 version of the cutesy Namco classic should be an ideal stocking-filler and just the ticket for those Boxing Day blues.





BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE

Hot off the presses from Gremlin comes *Basil The Great Mouse Detective*, that charming rodent inhabitant of Baker Street and star of the Walt Disney film of the same name. As Basil, you must rescue your friend Dr Dawson from the clutches of the reprehensible Ratigan. As you might expect, clue-finding is the name of the game here as you track the doirty rat through London's rodent underworld, visiting some of the city's most famous locations in the process. Basil, for the 64, should be in your local software stockist any day now.



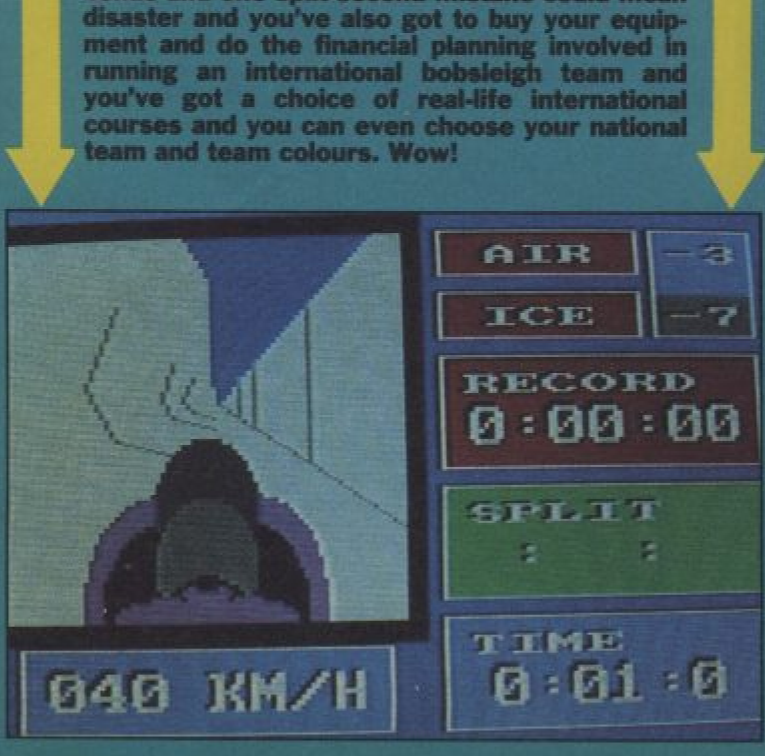
DICK SPECIAL

With over two years hard work gone into its development, Rainbird's *Dick Special: The Search For Spook* would want to be something fairly special. And, judging from what we saw on a recent visit to Rainbird Towers, it will be. Created by Sandy White and Angela Sutherland, *Dick Special* is the first fully animated cartoon character to be controlled by the player. In the wonderful — and graphically superb — world of Dick you'll have to solve logical and visual puzzles and collect a various items in order to save your dognapped chum, Spook. Among other things you'll encounter monsters in shabby hotel rooms and seagulls on window ledges as you guide your walking, running, jumping cartoon persona about this stunning program. It's due for release, on Amiga, before the year is out.

BUZZ

BOBSLEIGH

Ho, hum Mr Publicitypers on from Digital Intergration. Not *another* simulation? Well, what is it this time? Helicopters? Motorbikes? BOBSLEIGHS!!!?!? Weieeeerd! You mean that strange sport where you hurtle at hundreds of miles per hour down a trench in the snow in a bathtub? How can you have a sim based on that? Oh. We see. It's actually a really skilful sport, and you have to be able to negotiate fiercesome bends and one split-second mistake could mean disaster and you've also got to buy your equipment and do the financial planning involved in running an international bobsleigh team and you've got a choice of real-life international courses and you can even choose your national team and team colours. Wow!



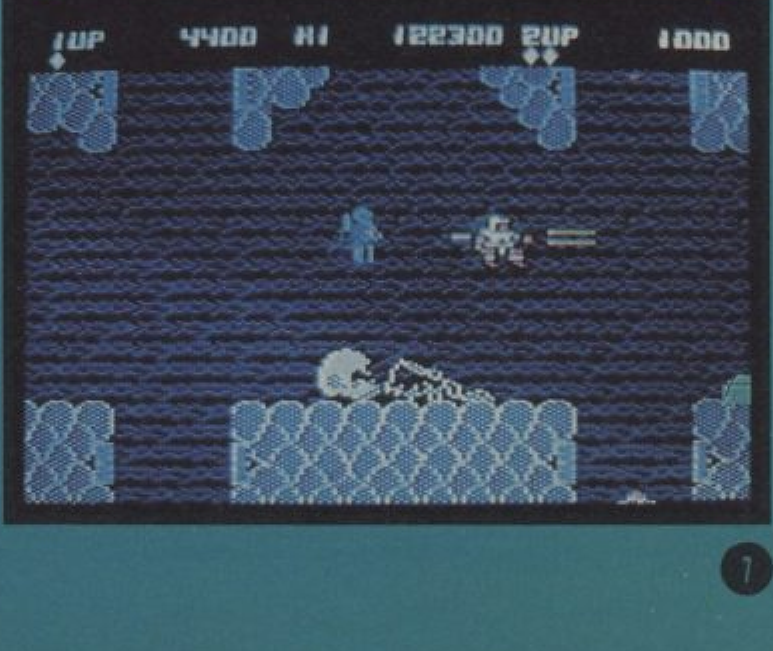
ROADWARS

In Melbourne House's *Roadwars*, you play a strange ballbearing-type thingie rolling at high speed along a rather treacherous stretch of spacehighway which encircles an alien-filled planet. You can flip your upper half open, thereby exposing a cannon for blasting the myriad nasties and obstacles which you encounter. You can play with a mate, sometimes cooperating as the two of you hurtle along this intergalactic gauntlet, occasionally trying to ram one another off the edge for extra high points, Sounds like fun, eh? But there's more: you'll be able to play *Roadwars* whether you're at home or away. Y'see, this Amiga version of the game is based upon an arcade game of the same name and due for release by Mastertronic's *Arcadia* label a mere matter of days before you'll be able to buy your very own copy on the high street. And a spokesperson for Mastertronic/Melbourne House/Arcadia assures us that we can expect to see more (nearly) simultaneous releases of arcade and home computer versions of the same games. Consider this space watched.



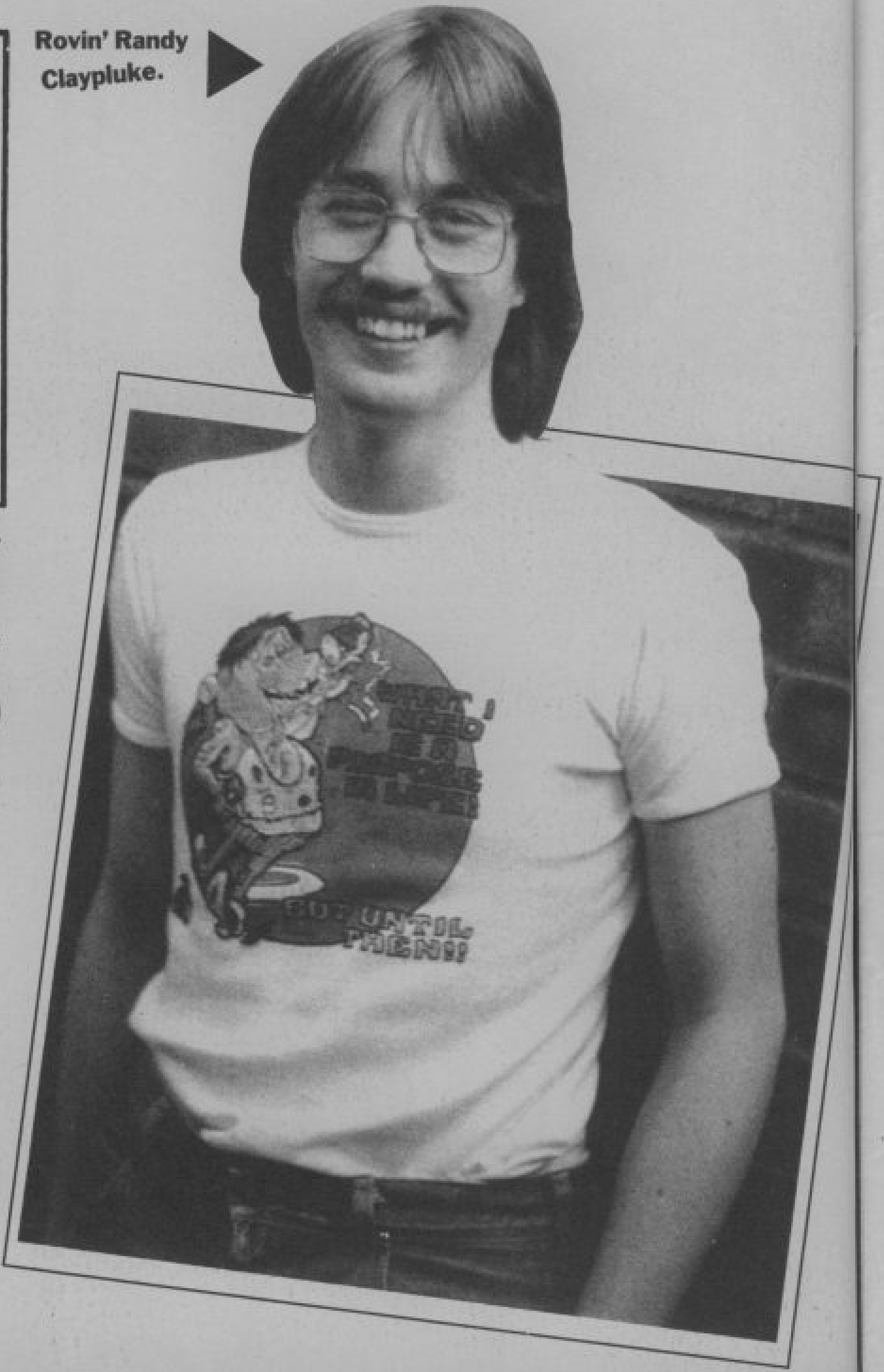
SIDEARMS

Early next month US Gold's recently established Go! label will be releasing their conversion of the enormously popular Capcom coin-op *Sidearms*. You and, if possible, a sidekick, must take on the evil Bozon empire who for some reason are intent on destroying the world. With aircraft, flying rocks and ceiling-mounted bombs to contend with en route to the ultimate showdown with Bozon's supreme fighter, the strangely named "Mobil Armour Sentipeet", it's just as well that there are plenty of the sidearms which give the game its name to be picked up. (Simply steer your onscreen warrior over the icons left behind when you destory certain enemy ships) including a "shot gun", a "mega bazooka launcher" and even a device whereby you and your companion (if you're playing in the two-player mode) become joined together like Siamese twins thereby halving your combined target areas and doubling your firepower. Yup, if plain old-fashioned blasting is what you crave, *Sidearms* should more than satisfy your destructive impulses.



BUZZ

Rovin' Randy Claypluke.



BRAYBROOK TUG OF WAR

A legal dispute between Hewson and Firebird over who is entitled to release the work of Andrew Braybrook has led to the release of the ace programmer's latest game, *Morpheus*, being halted.

The row began when Braybrook's company Graftgold, who had hitherto exclusively produced software for the Hewson label, signed a licensing agreement with Firebird to write product solely for them. The dispute is understood to centre around *Morpheus* and another Graftgold-written game, *Magnatron*. Hewson have been publicising both titles, and indeed copies of *Morpheus* were actually being sent out for review when an injunction is understood to have been taken out by Firebird, legally forbidding Hewson from publishing the game.

Both sides also appear to have agreed not to speak publicly about the row. When contacted about the matter neither Firebird's Paula Byrne nor Hewson boss Andrew Hewson were prepared to comment on the case, though Hewson did confirm that the dispute centres around "the extent to which an exclusive licence existed" between Hewson and Braybrook's company.

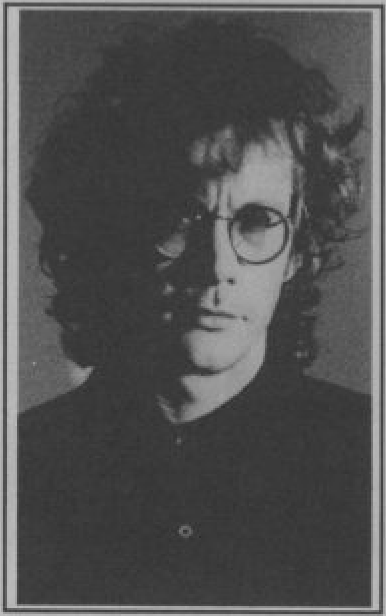


Who the hell is Warren Zevon???

That's what we were all asking ourselves up here in *CU* Plaza when the latest press release from recently-established Viz Design Software popped through our letter box.

Y'see, it turns out that Viz's first release, due out this month on the 64, is a quaint little game called *Werewolves of London*, which is based upon, and features a digitised soundtrack version of, a rather nifty toon of the same name by . . . yes, Warren Zevon.

So our fearless investigative reporting team did a bit of investigating, whereupon we discovered that this Zevon person is actually quite a well known singer-songwriter type from way out west who, when he's not drinking a bottle or two of vodka before breakfast, is given to making spiffing, if slightly bizarre records, with titles like "Roland The Headless Thompson Gunner" and "Bad Luck Streak In Dancing School", and we also stumbled on five copies of his latest album, which is absolutely chock-a-block with titles like "Even A Dog Can Shake Hands" and "Leave My Monkey Alone", and features guest appearances by a bevvy of rilly famous people, like Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Brian Setzer and Don Henley, and we thought to ourselves "why don't we give five CU readers a copy of this record, plus of course, a copy of the *Werewolves Of London* game, so that the *next* time somebody asks them 'Who the hell is Warren Zevon?' they'll know". Send your entries to Werewolves Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by November 3rd – first five out of the postbag win.



Telecom get Zarch warrant

Telecomsoft have snapped up the licence to convert *Elite* programmer David Braben's new game *Zarch* for the Amiga.

Braben's keenly-anticipated newie is currently making it's initial public appearance on Acorn's extraordinary new machine, the Archimedes, which boasts a faster micro-processor than any other personal computer on the market. A spokesman for Telecomsoft has confirmed that they will be releasing *Zarch*, probably on the Rainbird label, for other formats, including the Amiga, in the new year.

Zarch is a combination of shoot 'em up and strategy game with superfast 3-D scrolling graphics, the object of the game being to thwart the enemy from polluting the world with a red virus.

Its illustrious predecessor netted its co-author a reputed six-figure sum in royalties, as well as buckets of critical acclaim.

Electric dreams hang out

Electric Dreams have just revealed the identities of their recent batch of coin-op licences. Top of the list and their major contender for Christmas chart honours will be their conversion of *Super Hang On*, Sega's much raved-about follow-up.

Also due for release in the pre-Christmas period is *Firetrap*, Data East's popular fire-fighting game of a couple of years back.

And early in the New Year, fans of weirdness will be able to try their hands at ED's conversion of another, more recent Data East coin-op, the wacky *Karnov*), in which you play a fat little circus fire-breather battling his way through a formidable array of strange opponents, including ostrich-mounted skeletons, vicious vultures and statues which lob deadly ginger-nut biscuits!

Software houses back kids

With the shop shelves piling up with new software, one product which definitely deserves your attention and cash is *The Back Pack*, a compilation of games from a whole variety of software houses the proceeds of which will all go to the NSPCC and its Scottish sister organisation, The RSSPCC, to help disadvantaged and abused children.

The C64 compilation retails at £9.99 and features an array of popular games, including *Xeno* (from Argus Press Software), *Barry McGuigan's Boxing* (Activision), *Nomad* (Ocean), *Prodigy* (Electric Dreams), *Bounces* (Beyond), *Skyfox* (Electronic Arts), *Elektra Glide* (English Software), *Starion* (Melbourne House), *Bounty Bob Strikes Back* (US Gold).

UNTOUCHED!

Rumours flying about the software industry suggest that hit film "The Untouchables" will soon be the subject of a major licensing deal.

Starring Robert de Niro as notorious Chicago gangland boss Al Capone and Sean Connery as a hardened Irish cop determined to put "Scarface" behind bars, this Brian de Palma film has made over $75 million since its American release in July, and has been the top grossing film in this country since it first appeared here in September.

A number of software houses are known to have been approached and offered the licence for a fee rumoured to be in the region of £100,000, but so far no final agreement seems to have been reached. Ocean Software, who have already signed up another silver screen biggie, *Platoon*, earlier this year would seem to be favourites for the licence, though at the time of going to press they had no comment to make on the suggestion.

THIEVES STEEL MICRO AWARD: **Magnetic Scrolls' witty adventure *The Guild Of Thieves* has won Game Of The Year at the 1987 British Micro Computing Awards. This is Magnetic Scrolls' second Rainbird-published game, a follow-up to the equally ecstatically-received adventure, *The Pawn*. Now MS are waiting to see if their newest product, *Jinxter*, can make it three-in-a-row for the London-based software house.**

***COMMODORE QUIDS IN*:** **Commodore International Limited have just announced a net profit of $2.1 million for the quarterly period ending June 30, 1987. This represents an increase of nearly 100% on the net profit for the same three month period last year, and is, as Commodore boss Irving Gould was quick to point out, the company's "fifth successive quarter of profitability". Gould attributed Commodore's recent economic successes to "operating efficiencies implemented without sacrifice to aggressive new product, development and marketing". So now you know (if you're still awake).**

BUZZ

***CASTLE OF MIRRORS*:** **Mirrorsoft have just scored a coup by acquiring the rights to *Dark Castle*, an enormous graphic adventure by US software house Three-Sixty Pacific which has been wowing gamers across the water. Embarking upon your quest to overthrow the Black Knight armed only with a handful of rocks, you pass through 14 "danger zones", from dungeons to caves to laboratories. This month should see *Dark Castle*'s British release on the Amiga.**

The budget boys are bouncing back this Autumn after a lean spell throughout the Summer when the full priced games seemed to make most of the running.

Firebird's Arcade Classics takes the number one spot in the 64 and also manages to pick up a CU Cheapo of the Month accolade in the this issue.

Coin-op conversions are well represented in this month with Renegade fisting its way straight in at number three. The ancient cutesy game Bubble Bobble is also showing well at number five.

In the real arcades CU readers are pumping more coins into Out Run and Double Dragon than anything else. No sign of Afterburner yet — but it'll be there once the game goes on general release. Of that you may be sure.

Wacky charts are proving to be a real hit according to your letters so this month we present the mega-brilliant, entirely exclusive Top Ten Worst Excuses for being late.

On a more sensible note we have a clutch of CU Screen Stars and a CU Super Star game reviewed in this issue. Games like International Karate +, Indiana Jones, Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit, and Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer are sure to paint a totally different chart next month. It's big game launch time. So don't dare miss an issue of CU or you'll be sick.

CHAR

CU COMIX TEN

1) LOVE AND ROCKETS — Locas tambien to you, amigo
2) SWAMP THING — Alan Moore's monster mash
3) VIZ — the smelliest of trouser coughs
4) DARK KNIGHT — Batman in a bad mood
5) AMERICAN FLAGG — Reuban Flagg Plexus Ranger and video pirate
6) WATCHMEN — Alan Moore watches the super heroes
7) OINK! — a piggin' good read
8) CHARLEY'S WAR — a young cockney's tale of the trenches
9) DR AND QUINCH'S GUIDE TO LIFE — Alan Moore's intergalactic ICF
10) BALLAD OF HALO JONES — er, Alan Moore encore

Readers Coin-op Chart

TM	LM	
1	1	OUTRUN
2	2	DOUBLE DRAGON
3	4	R-TYPE
4	3	ROAD RUNNER
5	5	BUBBLE BOBBLE

So what are the top five going to be next month? Well, *you* decide: send your top five coin ops to Coin Op Charts, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And, both to thank y'all for your great response to date and to encourage ye to keep sending those charts in, we've decided to give away not one but *five* of our spanking new *CU* T Shirts to the first five top fives out of Mike P.'s broad brimmed hat. This month's lucky winners are Michael Robinson, Rotherham; Adam Penn, Luton; Christian Erlandsson, Sweden; James Kent, Ware; John Coe, Sheffield.





REVIEWERS CHOICE

What games have been thrilling us for the last four weeks? The CU reviewers name their hottest plays:

EUGENE LACEY: International Karate + Outlaw demo game on Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit, Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer.

MIKE PATTENDEN: Operation Wolf, Lazer War (hot new pinball machine).

NICK KELLY: Afterburner, Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit, Fire (wacky new pinball machine).

FERDY HAMILTON: International Karate + Truant (this is the game you play when you don't go to school) CU's Cool Spool.

TS



C64 CHART

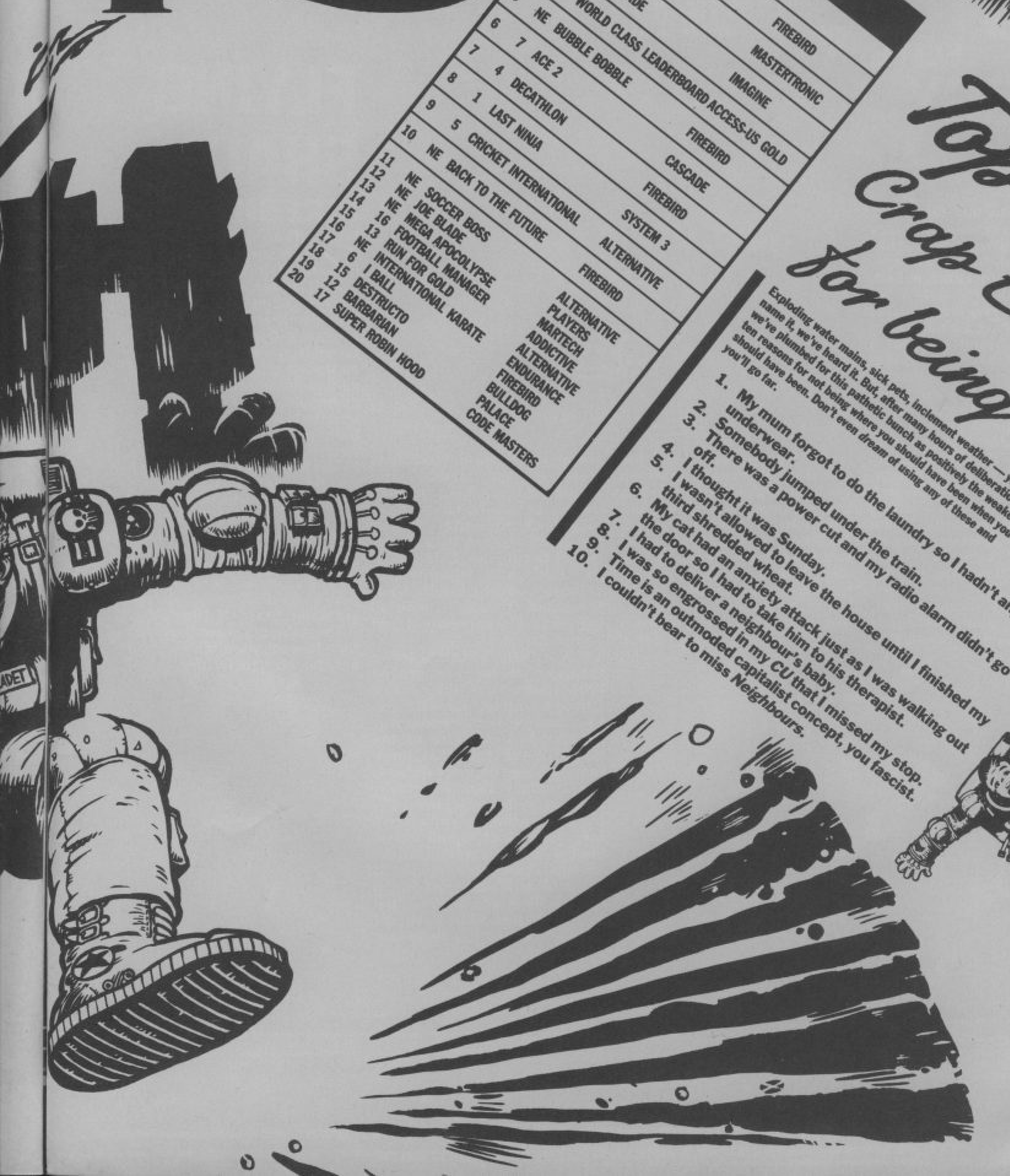
TM	LM		
1	NE	ARCADE CLASSICS	FIREBIRD
2	3	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
3	NE	RENEGADE	IMAGINE
4	2	WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	ACCESS-US GOLD
5	NE	BUBBLE BOBBLE	FIREBIRD
6	7	ACE 2	CASCADE
7	4	DECATHLON	FIREBIRD
8	1	LAST NINJA	SYSTEM 3
9	5	CRICKET INTERNATIONAL	ALTERNATIVE
10	NE	BACK TO THE FUTURE	FIREBIRD
11	NE	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE
12	NE	JOE BLADE	PLAYERS
13	NE	MEGA APOCOLYPSE	MARTECH
14	16	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
15	13	RUN FOR GOLD	ALTERNATIVE
16	NE	INTERNATIONAL KARATE	ENDURANCE
17	6	I BALL	FIREBIRD
18	15	DESTRUCTO	BULLDOG
19	12	BARBARIAN	PALACE
20	17	SUPER ROBIN HOOD	CODE MASTERS

Top 10 Crap Excuses for being late

Exploding water mains, sick pets, inclement weather — you name it, we've heard it. But, after many hours of deliberation we've plumbed for this pathetic bunch as positively the weakest ten reasons for not being where you should have been when you should have been. Don't even dream of using any of these and you'll go far.

1. My mum forgot to do the laundry so I hadn't any clean underwear.
2. Somebody jumped under the train.
3. There was a power cut and my radio alarm didn't go off.
4. I thought it was Sunday.
5. I wasn't allowed to leave the house until I finished my third shredded wheat.
6. My cat had an anxiety attack just as I was walking out the door so I had to take him to his therapist.
7. I had to deliver a neighbour's baby.
8. I was so engrossed in my CU that I missed my stop.
9. Time is an outmoded capitalist concept, you fascist.
10. I couldn't bear to miss Neighbours.





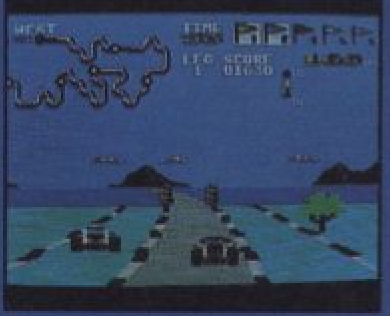
COOL SPOOL



South course of Buggy Boy.



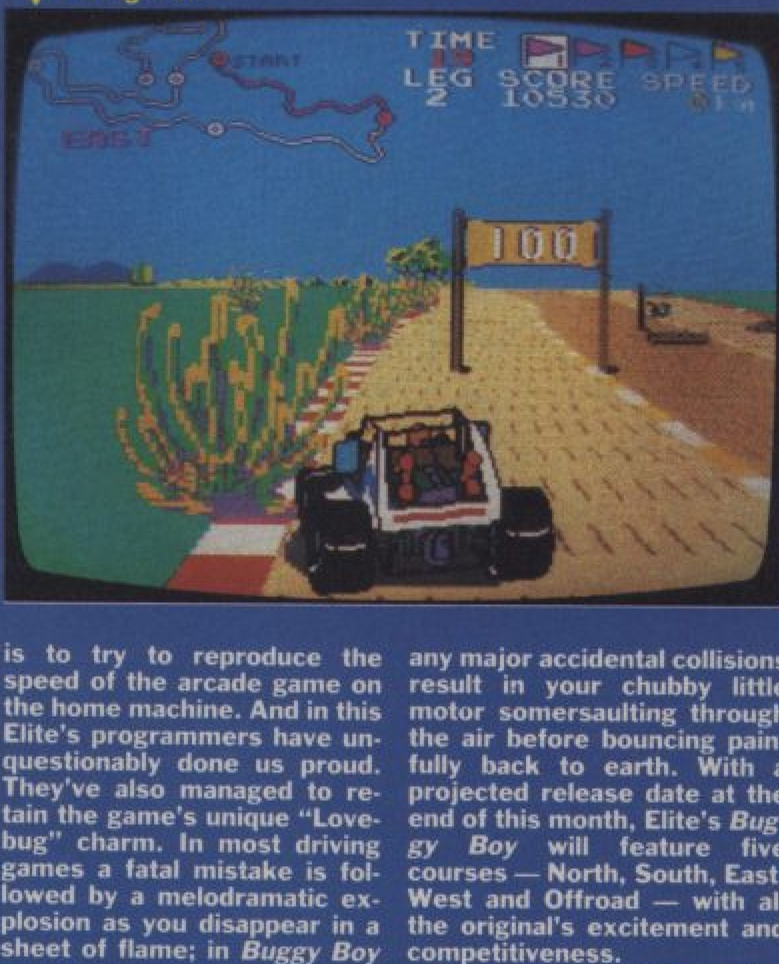
Out over enemy territory.



West course and dummy buggy.



Arcade shot from the original.



ELITE

BUGGY BOY

In contrast to our other two Cool Spool reviews, *Buggy Boy*'s coin op predecessor has been around for a while — since the end of 1985, in fact. Programmed by Tatsumi for Taito, *Buggy Boy* was unusual for a car racing game in that your trusty steed was not a sleek streamlined turbo-charged Formula One job but a rather dumpy little jeep. But if you thought that your hard-earned ten pees were merely going to entitle you to a gentle romp about the countryside, one play put you straight. This game was FAST, and, with flags to collect and a selection of hazards (giant rocks, oil patches, trees, fences and other cars) to avoid, little time was left for sightseeing.

With all car racing games, one of the main challenges faced by would-be converters is to try to reproduce the speed of the arcade game on the home machine. And in this Elite's programmers have unquestionably done us proud. They've also managed to retain the game's unique "Lovebug" charm. In most driving games a fatal mistake is followed by a melodramatic explosion as you disappear in a sheet of flame; in *Buggy Boy* any major accidental collisions result in your chubby little motor somersaulting through the air before bouncing painfully back to earth. With a projected release date at the end of this month, Elite's *Buggy Boy* will feature five courses — North, South, East, West and Offroad — with all the original's excitement and competitiveness.

For COOL SPOOL, we've managed to lay our greedy little mitts on the entire Offroad course, allowing you to actually play the whole way through this one-fifth of the game. We're told that there may be a wee bit more detail in the product that eventually ends up on the shop shelves — but from what we've seen so far, your Cool Spool demo should be a pretty accurate version of the completed game. And, if you'll just load it up, we think you'll agree that in *Buggy Boy* Elite have definitely done the business. Bounce on!



FLYING SHARK

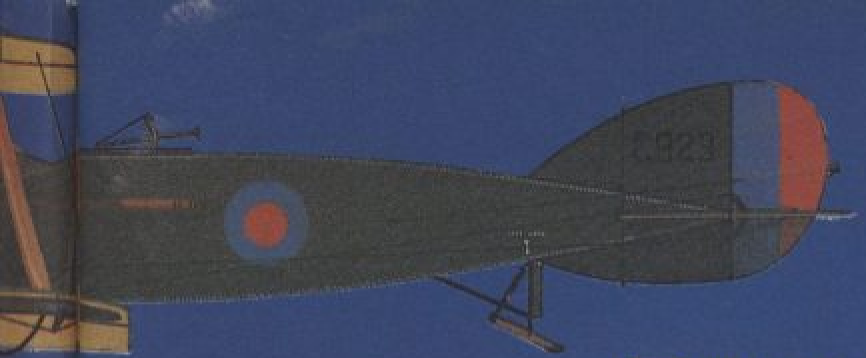
FIREBIRD

When Taito released *Flying Shark* this spring, it proved an instant hit in the arcades. It wasn't so much that this vertically scrolling shoot 'em up was doing anything strikingly original — Capcom had already attempted a fairly similar approach to aerial combat games in their *1942*. What distinguished *Flying Shark* was its brilliant execution of a fairly common theme. Your lone bi-plane, the forests, towns and beaches over which you flew and the tanks, ships and aircraft which attacked you were all described in exquisite graphic detail, and the irregular waves of attack combined with your own manoevrability really did entitle *Flying Shark* to that much-abused accolade, State Of The Art.

The cabinets were hardly in the showrooms when Firebird announced that they had



Screen shot of the coin-op.



Firebird's licence takes off.



signed the licence and would be bringing out *Flying Shark* on home computers in time for Christmas. With the extraordinary level of detail contained in the coin op, converting this game was never going to be an easy task. But, as we discovered on a recent visit to the programmers, Firebird have managed to reproduce the playability and "feel" of this tremendous arcade hit. All the different levels will be there, from jungle to ocean to beach to town, each with the original's array of enemy craft, smart bombs and extra firepower. An excellent job has been done in adapting the original soundtrack for the 64.

But most importantly of all, the frenzied excitement has been retained.

Our preview contains almost the whole of level one, complete with attack waves. Smart bombs have yet to be added but otherwise this demo is going to give you a pretty accurate representation of the finished product. In our considered opinion, *Flying Shark* is going to blast up the yuletide charts.

Can't wait to try your hand at this cracker in the comfort of your own home? Well, thanks to CU's Cool Spool, you don't have to!

720°

US GOLD

Just in case you've spent the last three months in a Tibetan monastery, skateboarding is back! And, if by some chance you happen to be a director of Atari, no doubt you're laughing all the way to the bank. Launched early this year, the arcade version of *720°* couldn't have been timed better.

Housed in a specially-built cabinet crowned with massive pair of stereo speakers, Atari's skateboarding smash combines *Paperboy*'s wit with impressive realism and playability, and tops the whole lot off with a devastatingly grungey soundtrack. Sassy, trashy, loud and up to the millisecond, *720°* was definitely *the* coin op to be caught playing in 1987.

The conversion licence was quickly snapped up by US Gold and they've had *Ghosts and Goblins* programmer Chris Butler beavering away ever since so as to bring all the thrills and spills of the coin op into your living room.

Our punky skateboarding hero will find himself in an environment strikingly similar to the original, with a futuristic streetscape to be negotiated and four special skateparks to compete in for points and prizes. We haven't seen all the sprites yet but, if the backgrounds are anything to go by, we expect to find a full complement of bikers, Buicks and bodybuilders scattered about the streets, impeding you in your efforts to acquire more equipment, perform ever more zany stunts and, above all, survive for as long as possible. The player control is truly excellent, allowing you to flip your character about the place in an incredibly realistic way. And, as if to prove how serious they are about capturing all the excitement of the coin op, the design team have come up with a unique idea for the soundtrack: the game will come complete with a separate sound cassette of the arcade soundtrack for you to sling into your own sound system while you're playing. Neat, eh?

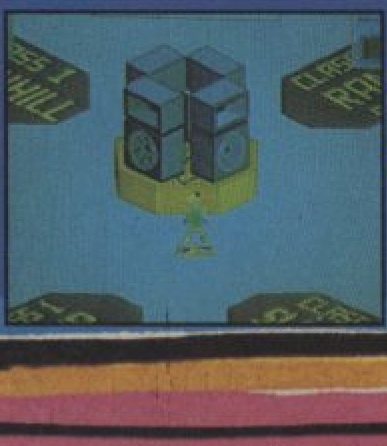
Our Cool Spool demo allows you to guide the skateboarder around the streets of Skate City. The demo's an early one, so no sprites have been included, but you will be able to see just how smoothly *720°* is going to play. We reckon this one's going to be red 'ot, rock 'ard and well wicked. Check it out and decide for yourself.

Downhill slope from the conversion.

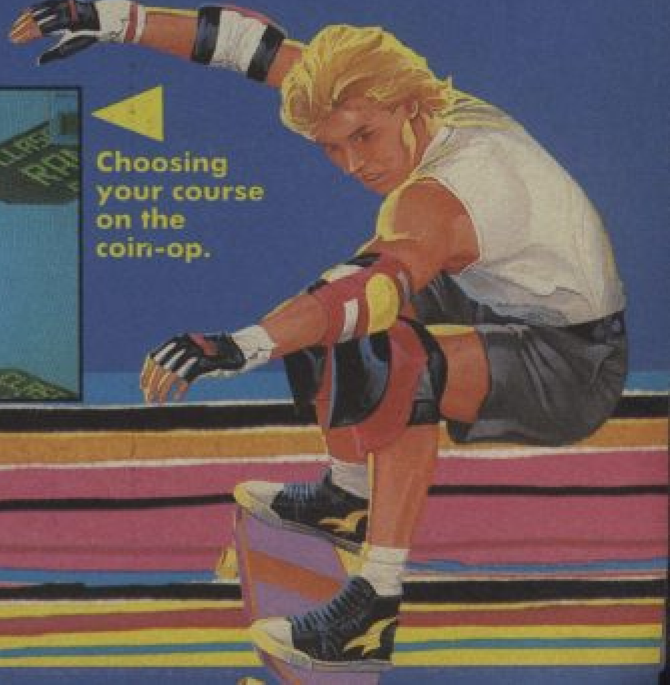




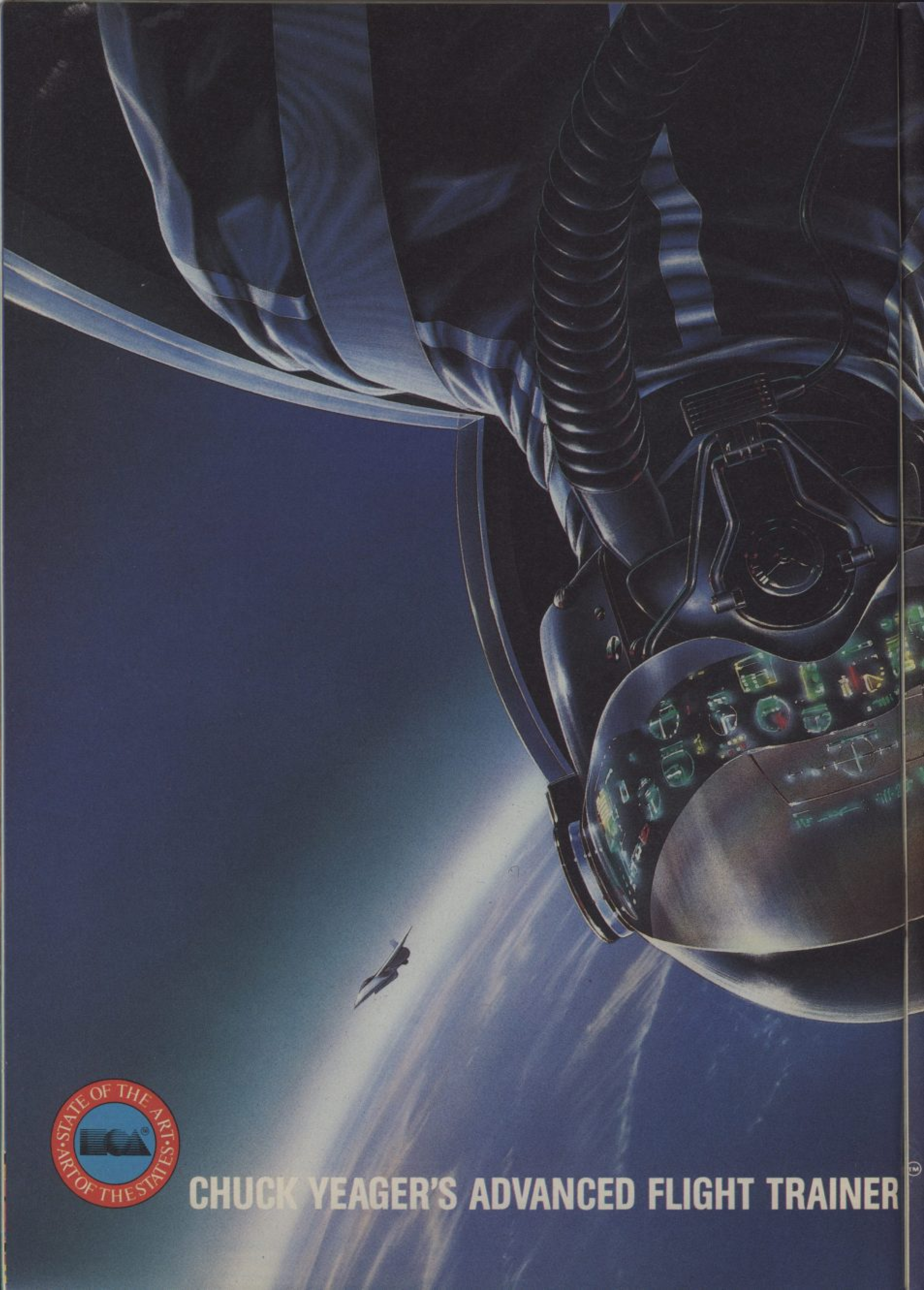
Downtown in 720°ville.

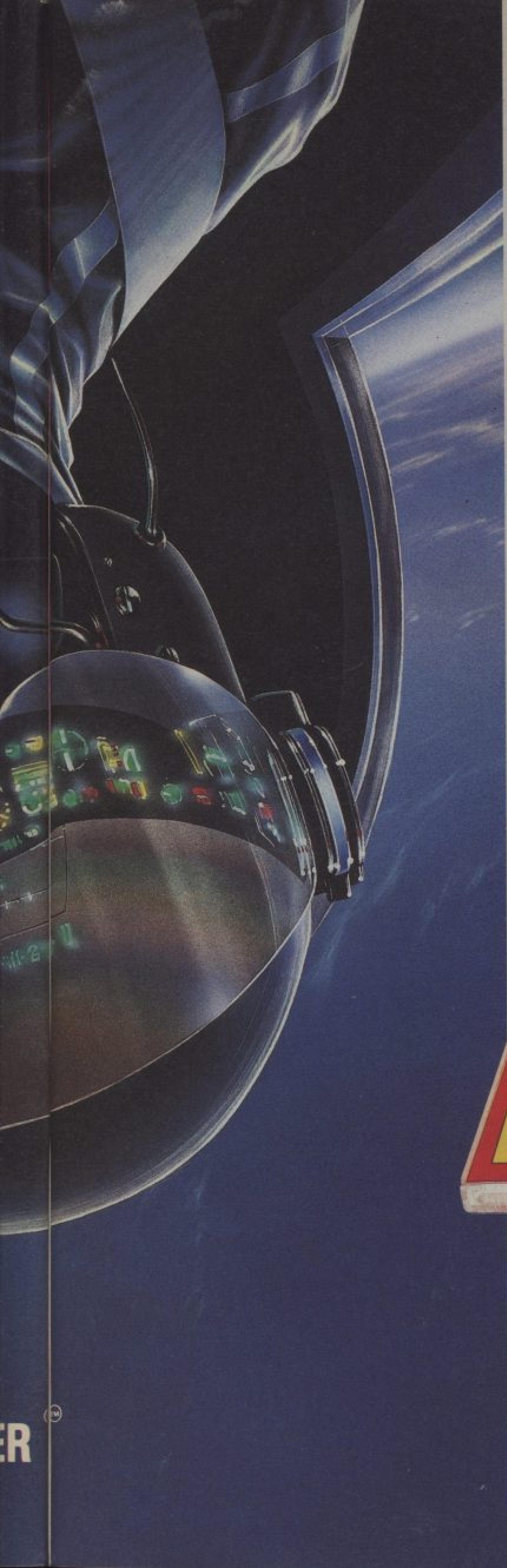


Choosing your course on the coin-op.



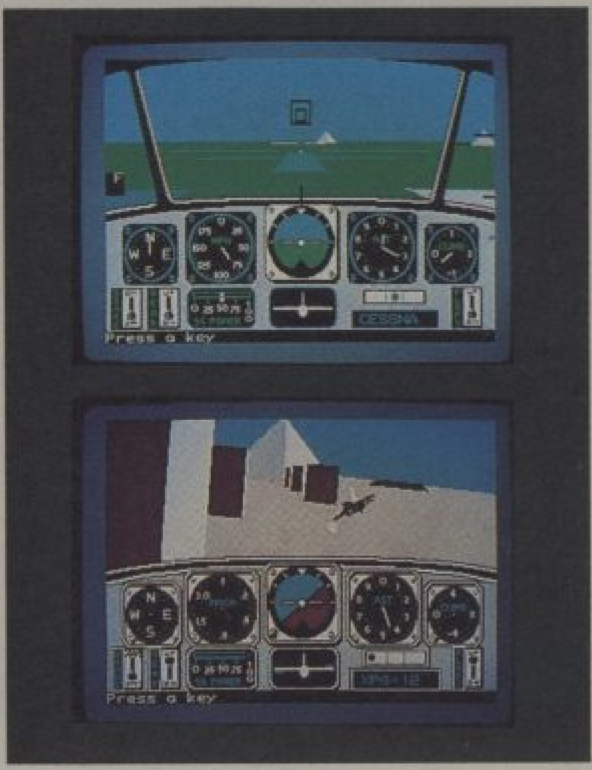
screen shot of the coin-op.


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GISSA JOB!

Yup, occasionally we get a wee bit bored up here in our luxurious penthouse place of work. We moan. We make anonymous obscene phone calls to our current least favourite software house. Occasionally Mike Pattenden even tries being nice to somebody for a few minutes. But it's no good. Y'see, what we really need is a nice healthy dose of new blood. Somebody else to come up with those classic CU one-liners like "this is quite a nice game if you like this sort of thing" and "spending a few hours in front of loads of spinning circles is about as exciting as watching your undies go round and round in the laundrette".



COMPETITION

It was when we were having a razzle on our hot-off-the-presses **Cool Spool** that the idea struck us: why not get those literate folk amongst our readers to REVIEW the thing! And, if the said reviewer managed to reach the truly stupendous heights of our own literary genius, why perhaps he or she might like to have a go contributing to CU on a regular basis!

Tell us what you think about **Cool Spool**. Be honest. Be witty, if you can. But, most importantly, be not longer than three hundred words. Masterpieces should be sent, preferably clearly written on a large unmarked banknote, to Cool Spool Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And one more thing — your deadline for entries is November 23rd, that's longer than we'll give you if you win! (*Too right! overworked freelancer*). Stacks of free games for runners up.

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Cut out and use as an inlay for your cool spool

COOL SPOOL

COMMODORE USER



THE CU COOL SPOOL

SIDE A

FLYING SHARK

BLAST your way through an entire level of Firebird's stunning new shoot 'em up.

720°

CHECK OUT the zany urban streetscape of US Gold's fab skateboarding licence.

SIDE B

BUGGY BOY

BOUNCE around a whole track from Elite's wacky jeepster speedalong.

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MORE FUN THAN HAVING A GOOD TIME!

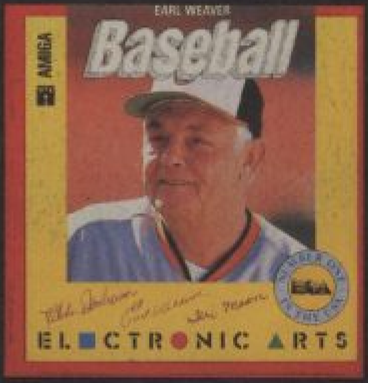
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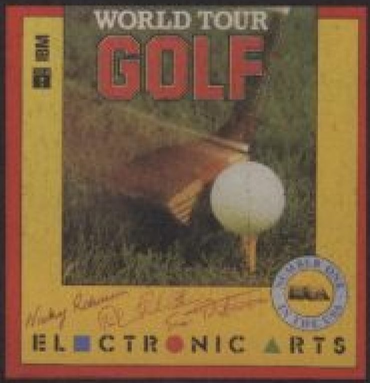
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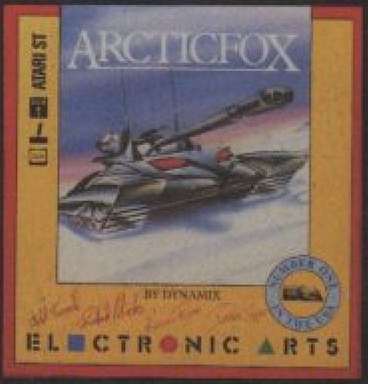
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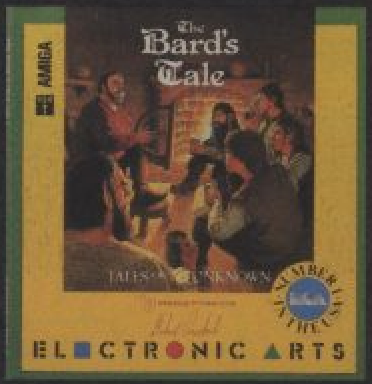
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SUPER SPRINT

C64/128
Electric Dreams
Price: £9.99/cassette £14.99/disk

As far as conversions go, Electric Dreams' *Super Sprint* isn't that bad. It follows the staggeringly popular Atari coin-op very closely, without missing any of the essential features except one — playability.

Like the Atari original, and unlike most other racing games, *Super Sprint* doesn't put you in the driver's seat, hunched over the wheel as the bend and ramps come hurtling towards you. Instead it opts for an overhead view, with each circuit laid out like a minature Scalextric track, complete with miniature Scalextric cars.

There are eight circuits in all, loaded in two files, and the second set of four can only be loaded after the first four have been successfully completed.

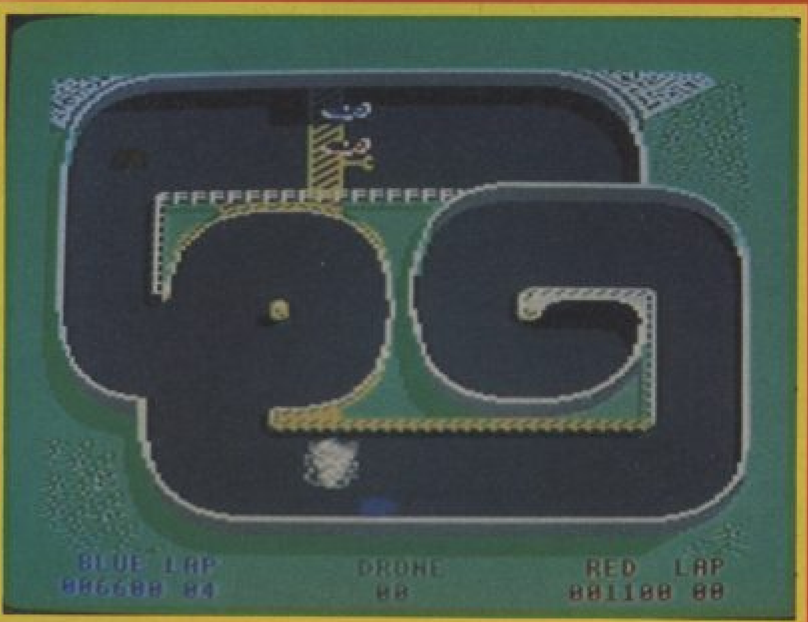
The circuits range from the merely difficult, with hair-pin bends, to the completely evil. Some of the tracks have gates which open and close, some have jump-ramps which must be taken at speed, and some have blind sections where the track doubles under itself and the cars are hidden from view. And just in case you start getting cocky, there are the occasional oil slicks, puddles and whirlwinds to send your car into a spin.

Driving into bonus panels increases your score, and collecting three of the golden spanners which haphazardly appear earns you a custom car bonus at the end of the race, where you can improve the traction, speed, acclereration and scoring performance of your car.

But despite all this authentic presentation, somewhere along the road some of the coin-op's playability seems to have gone astray. Joystick control is a real bitch, and it'll be ages before you'll be able to get your motor cruising round the track without skidding into crash barriers, rebounding all over the shop, and roaring off in the wrong direction.

It's a major achievement just to complete a lap, never mind actually being first past the chequered flag, and to make matters worse, the computer-controlled 'drone' cars are entirely infallible.

No awards for graphics here — but then the coin-op wasn't actually Outrun either.



Spanners are useful — oil slicks are not.





It's all cheers in the Winners Enclosure.

The two-player mode is much more successful, and this is where the game comes into its own. Your own shortcomings as a Grand Prix racer don't seem quite so embarrassing when your friend is also a total dip-stick. The whole thing can be quite entertaining, provided that you don't opt for the three-car Super Sprint mode, where both humans are pitted against a drone car which, as usual, makes no mistakes.

Super Sprint has lots of nice touches (like the 'chopper which delivers a new car whenever yours blows up), but it also has lots of eccentrities which are mildly annoying. The hi-score table doesn't register anything less than units of 100, so if you've got 1350 points, 50 get lopped off immediately. On the other hand, bonus points are sometimes awarded arbitrarily, and I once got 7200 for colliding with a wall. And as well as the official short-cuts on the circuits, there are some unofficial ones, so that you can get ahead of the competitors by speeding up a jump-ramp at an angle and completely missing out one loop of track.

But in the end, whether you like it or not will depend on how quickly you can master control of your car. A lot of patience and a responsive joystick will help enormously and, not least, a friend to play it with.

Bill Scolding

Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7
Overall



Russia

64/128
SSG
Price: £23.95

Before I proceed, I think a quick history lesson is in order. In 1941, Germany decided to scrap plans for the invasion of Britain and concentrate on a second front against Russia. This turned out to be Hitler's biggest and most costly mistake. The Nazi forces were far better equipped and trained than the Russian army who were still using weapons similar to that which they used during the First World War. At the outset Germany made some phenomenal gains at Russia's expense. It took mere months for a sizeable chunk of the Reichs forces to be fighting deep within Russia right up to Stalingrad itself where Russian partisans fought pitch battles in the city's shattered streets.

There was one enemy the German war machine had never envisaged fighting: the weather. Blizzards and sub-zero temperatures froze the diesel in the tanks, German troops had no winter clothing, and no experience of the bitter temperatures.

The Red Army had prepared in advance, with special diesel that would not freeze, and thick winter clothing for the troops. By late 1943 Russia's force, no longer defending their cities, now had their sights set on Berlin.

Russia the game concentrates on the period starting when Germany first launched the attack against Russia up until the last desperate attempt to capture Stalingrad. This is broken down into three smaller scenarios with one large full scale campaign which lasts for the full duration. Historically the game is fairly accurate, but then, no game can be truly accurate as all the noticeable points of a battle can obviously not be conveniently worked into the game. However the game is highly accurate in other respects with everything from Panzer corps to mountain troops. In the first scenario you have twelve weeks in which to capture Leningrad, a bit tricky at first, but ideal to get the novice player under way.

Some of the options are not really essential until you start on the main Russian campaign, which to say the least is a toughie. If you get a little bit bored with the scenarios which come with the game, there is a comprehensive design feature which not only allows for troop re-adjustment but also enables you to change city specifications. As well as change terrain features you can redesign a whole region.

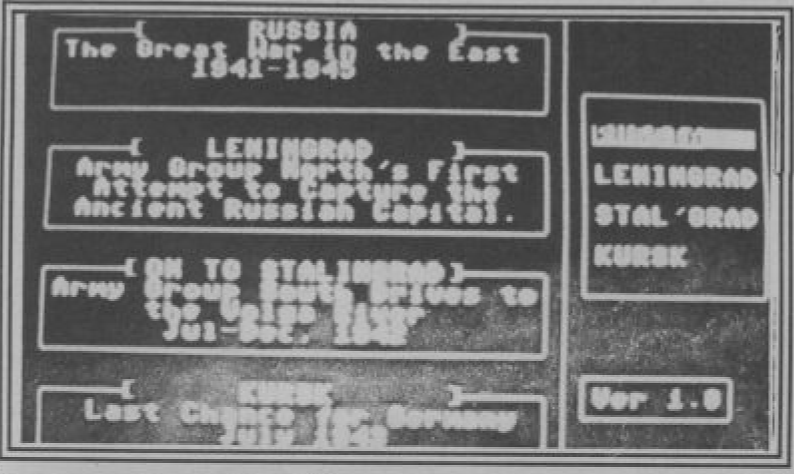
Russia is streaks ahead of the war games I've seen lately, and it looks like SSG are going to challenge for the top slot if their games keep up to this standard. I have not judged the game on sound and graphics as I consider these categories largely inappropriate to war games. Reality of the game and authenticity are what counts.

Russia is interesting, absorbing, and playable. And to tell you the truth, I can't wait to get my hands on another SSG title. Packaging is superb with four cards giving a step by step guide through the game menu's. You also get two detailed map cards as well, so you can really plan ahead in a complex game.

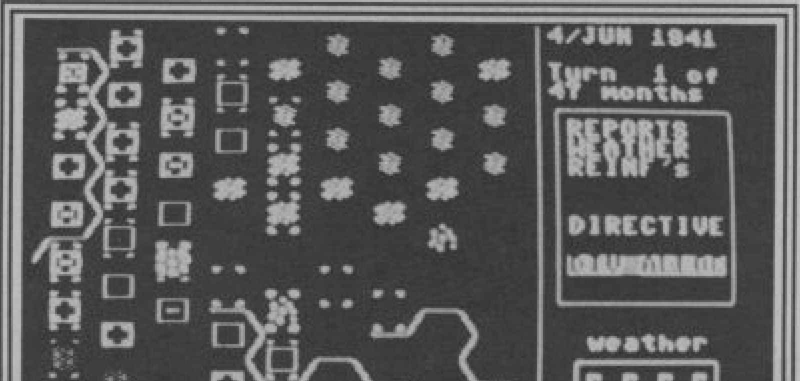
So you buys your cookie, you takes your crumble. But I'd much rather have a copy of *Russia*, thank you.

Mark Patterson

▼ **Can you change the course of history and defeat the red army . . . ?**



▼ **. . . Or will you lose the coldest war**



Graphics	N/A
Sound	N/A
Toughness	
Endurance	
Value	
8 Overall	

TAI PAN





64/128
Ocean
Price: £8.95 /cassette

At first glimpse this looks, or at least sounds like another oriental martial arts job. But look a little closer and on the cover you'll see a pair of sabres locked in mortal combat. No, this is Ocean's attempt to follow on the success of *Shogun* and get in on the wave of pirate mania that seems to be sweeping over our screens. Like *Shogun, Tai Pan* is based (loosely) on a James Clavell novel.

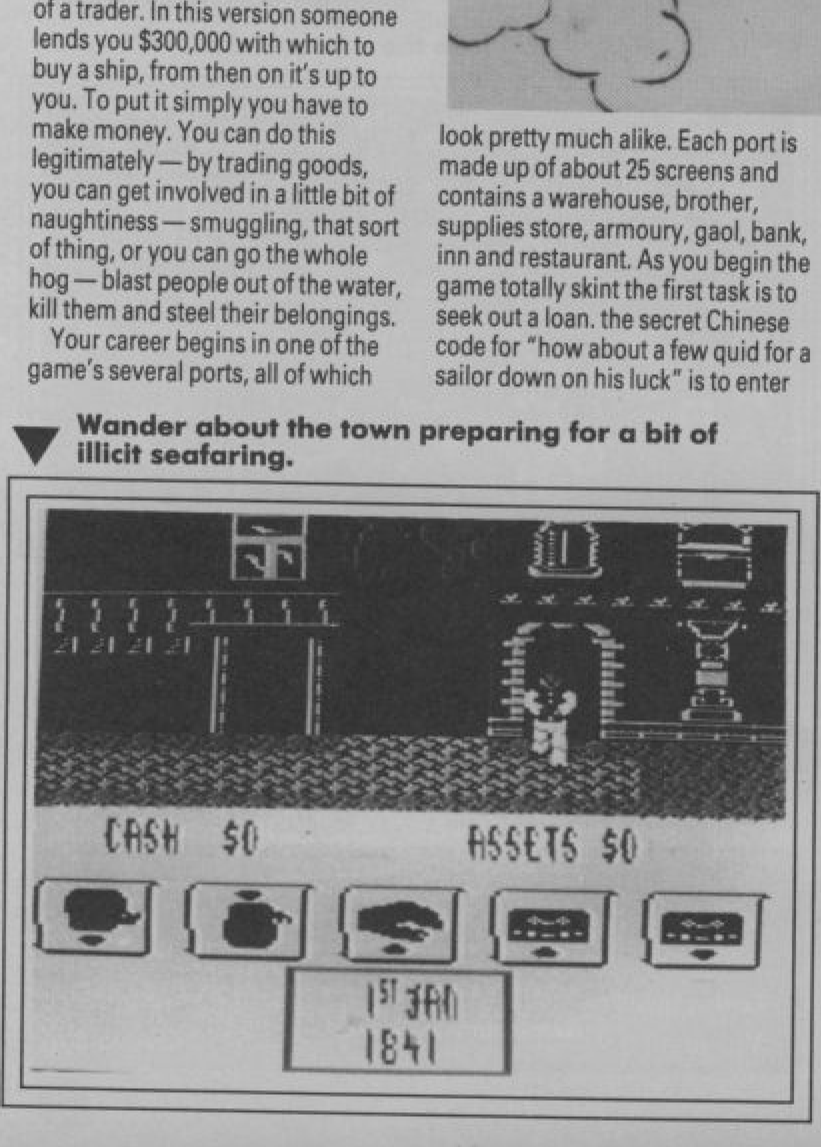
This is the story of Dirk Struann who made a name for himself smuggling contraband in the South China Seas. You too can belive the excitement of trading in busy ports, dealing with shady smugglers, and battle on the high seas. Cobblers actually. Sorry to dissapoint you so early on, but *Tai Pan* is, in my opinion at least, pretty naff. It seems we're back to the days when software houses think just because a game has a good yarn to go with it you can get away with any old bilge.

The basic idea of the game is essentially the same as in other games of this kind. You take the role of a trader. In this version someone lends you $300,000 with which to buy a ship, from then on it's up to you. To put it simply you have to make money. You can do this legitimately — by trading goods, you can get involved in a little bit of naughtiness — smuggling, that sort of thing, or you can go the whole hog — blast people out of the water, kill them and steel their belongings.

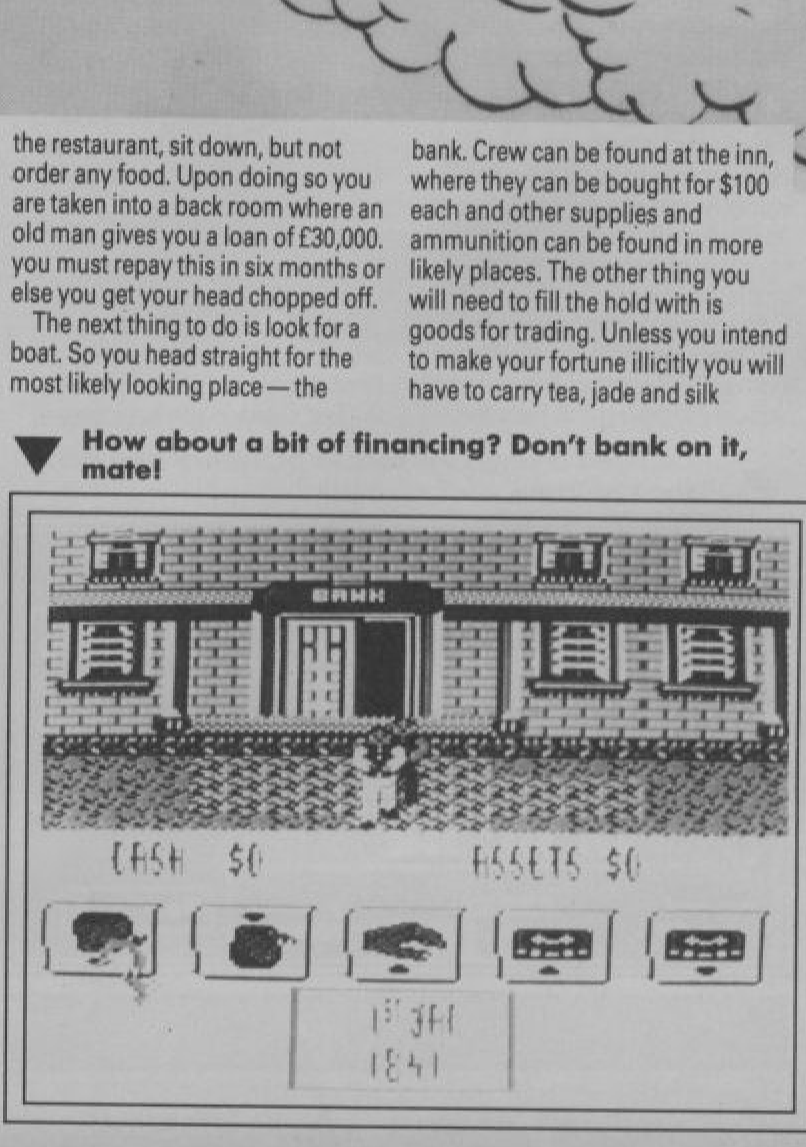
Your career begins in one of the game's several ports, all of which look pretty much alike. Each port is made up of about 25 screens and contains a warehouse, brother, supplies store, armoury, gaol, bank, inn and restaurant. As you begin the game totally skint the first task is to seek out a loan. the secret Chinese code for "how about a few quid for a sailor down on his luck" is to enter the restaurant, sit down, but not order any food. Upon doing so you are taken into a back room where an old man gives you a loan of £30,000. you must repay this in six months or else you get your head chopped off.

The next thing to do is look for a boat. So you head straight for the most likely looking place — the bank. Crew can be found at the inn, where they can be bought for $100 each and other supplies and ammunition can be found in more likely places. The other thing you will need to fill the hold with is goods for trading. Unless you intend to make your fortune illicitly you will have to carry tea, jade and silk

Wander about the town preparing for a bit of illicit seafaring.



How about a bit of financing? Don't bank on it, mate!



between the ports, and all of these can be bought and sold at the warehouse.

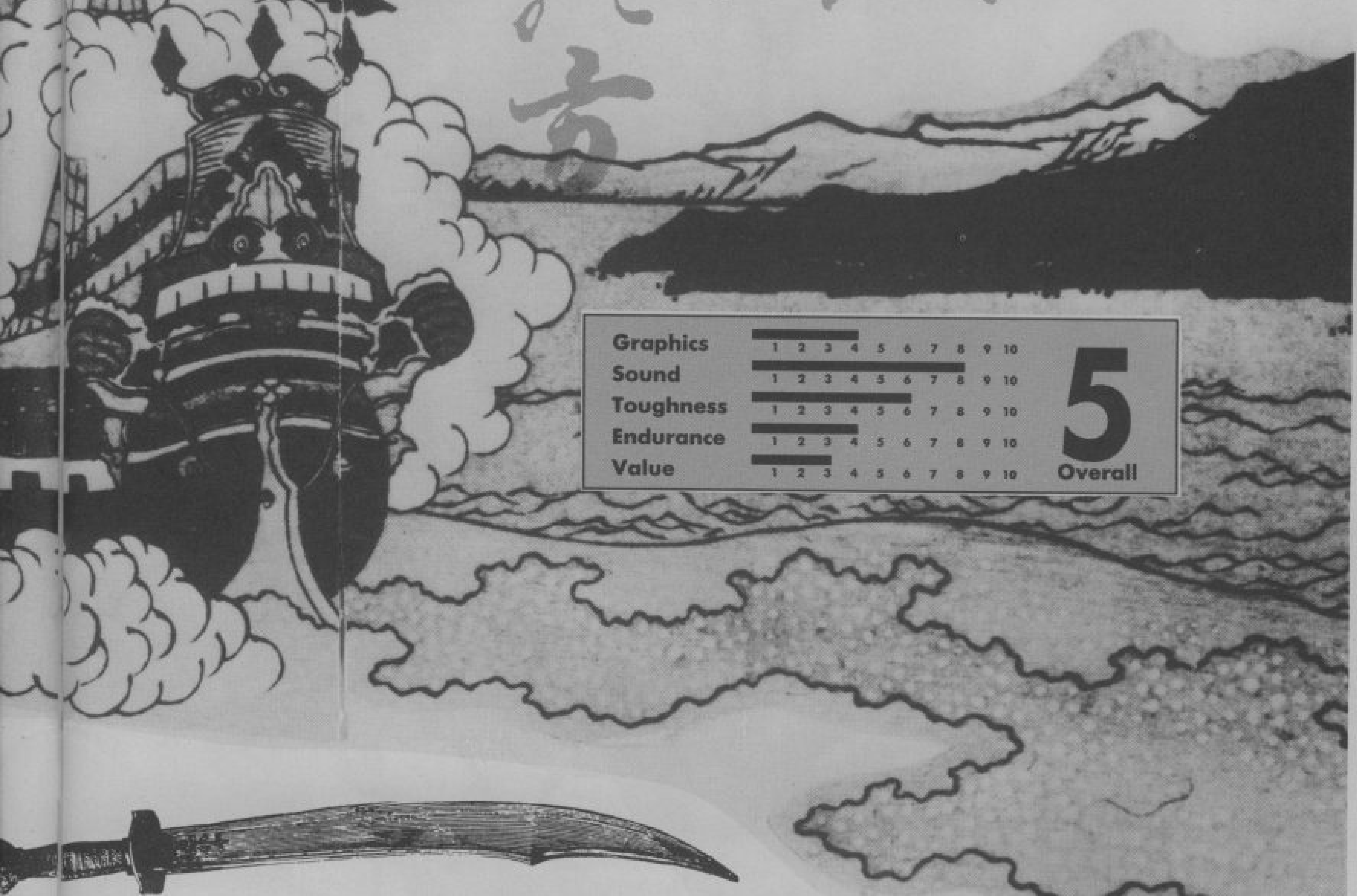
If that sounds a bit mundane you can always buy something (you never find out what it is) from a bloke on the street corner who surreptitiously offers "'ere, I got something wot might interest ya" or words to that effect. Oh, I nearly forgot to mention, if you fancy a quick bonk the brothel's the place to go.

When you get bored with loafing around town, which shouldn't take too long, head for the quay and set sail. Being at sea is, if anything, more boring than dry land, but it's nice to get a change of scenery. You steer the crude looking barge left and right with the joystick until you come upon another port looking remarkably like all the others. Alternatively, if you spot another ship you can enter into combat mode. Combat mode is a remarkably lifelike simulation of a type-in game for the VIC 20 which first appeared in 1863. A ship crosses the horizon from left to right and you must attempt to hit it by adjusting the elevation of your stationary cannon.

But that's not all. Ships, including your own, can be boarded and a not very exciting shoot 'em up ensues. This involves dodging enemy musket bullets and cutting down the crew with a single thrust of your sabre. The object is to kill the captain, or plunder his vessel. Each time you are hit you lose a crew member, lose them all and you're out of the game. This is an interesting diversion for a couple of minutes but its lack of sophistication is typical of the whole game.

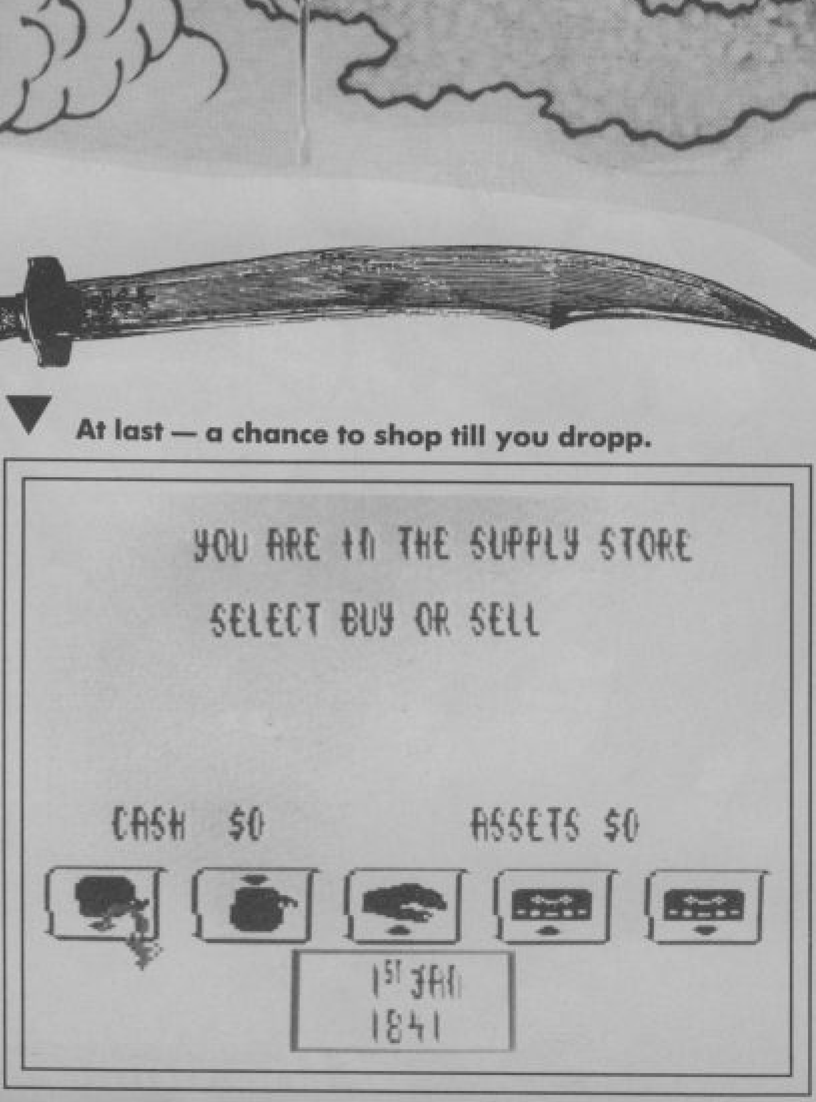
There are a number of things I've not bothered to mention. Like the asinine gambling game that can be played in the restaurant, the island on which you can supposedly land and the fact that your crew dies of scurvy if you don't feed them. But none of these alter the fact that on a general level the game is completely naff. In order for something like this to work there have to be some surprises, things have to vary. What's the point of spending days crossing a boring ocean if what's on the other side is exactly the same as what you left behind? For my money there's still only one swashbuckling sim and that's microprose *Pirates*. All the others, including *Tai Pan* are leagues behind.

Ken McMahon

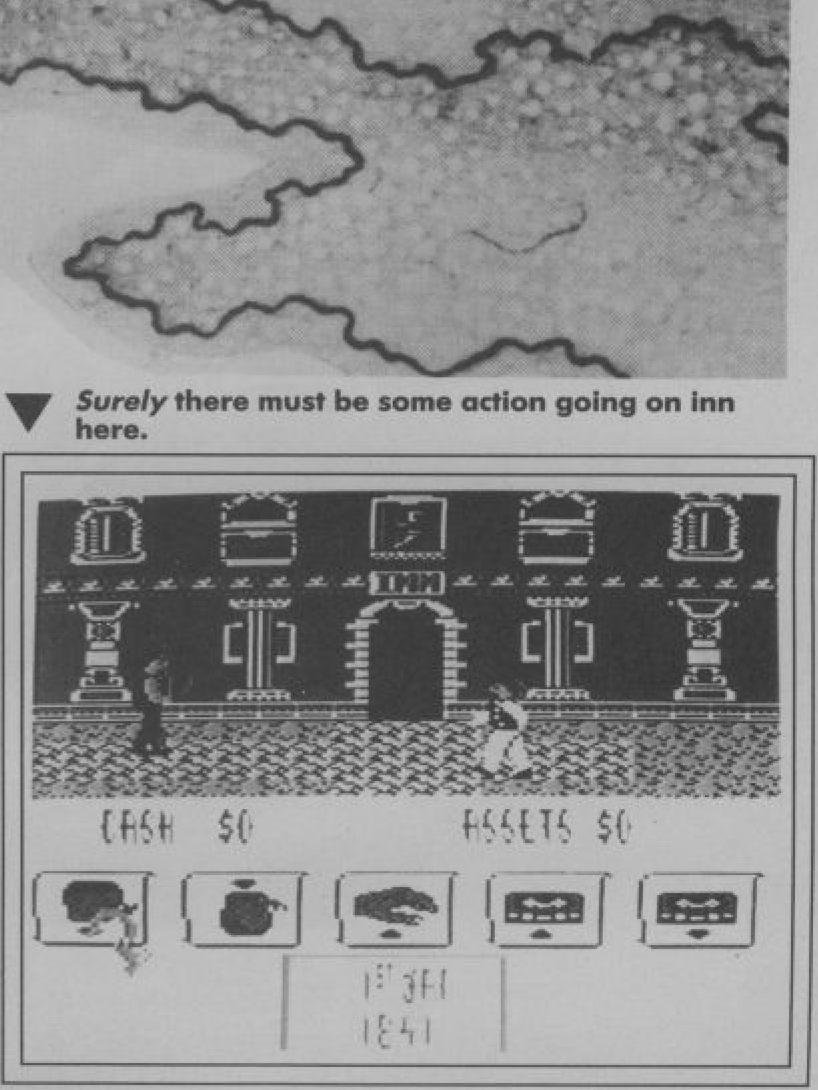


Rating	Score (out of 10)
Graphics	4
Sound	8
Toughness	6
Endurance	4
Value	3
Overall	**5**

▼ **At last — a chance to shop till you dropp.**



▼ ***Surely* there must be some action going on inn here.**



SOLOMONS KEY

▶ Just how do you get that key?



64/128
US Gold
Price: £9.99/cass

King Solomon's mines. Heard of them? Good. As the legend has it, he really struck it rich, earning a fortune from his string of gold mines. He was so fantastically wealthy there wasn't much that he couldn't afford. So 'ol King Solly's got all this lolly lying around in these megafantastically dangerous vaults, not even collecting interest when he could have opened an account in a certain bank and entitled himself to a free filofax.

With all this wealth around, there's no way he can keep track of it all, especially the minor bits (like twenty-four carat diamonds). Knowing this, a little guy has decided to cash in on this minor loophole. Unfortunately, owing to circumstances beyond my control I haven't any proper instructions for this game, and therefore I don't know the lead character's name. So I'll call him Bod for the sake of convenience.

Sadly for Bod, the treasure is not all contained in one room, but a little bit is stashed in each room leading up to the main treasure room at the end of the quest. Standing in Bod's way, though, are a lot of rocks and blocks which he must navigate to get to the next level. Basically there are two types of block, zappable and unzappable. Zappable blocks you can vaporise in two shakes of an hero's finger. Or alternatively you can just as easily create blocks to build a gilded stairway to higher areas of the game to get keys and the other bits which help to make the game a lot more interesting. Of course Bod comes equipped with fire balls as standard. But what good are fire balls without the occasional critter to incineratate in a glorious display of pyrotechnics? The sort of things you'll encounter in the way of enemies tend to be the left-overs from Greco-Roman legend (you know, dragons, fire-breathings dogs, killer bees, spiders and the like).

The table of additional extras you can kit Bod out with is nearly as impressive as *Bubble Bobble*'s, including extra fire power, potions and powerful fire bombs. The one thing that comes into play most of all in this game is that greased-out slimeball you call a head. Yes, this is one of those games which gets more than the trigger finger itching. Well it managed to get me thinking (which hurt), and my reflexes working, which must be a minor miracle in itself.



The graphics are not stunning but they suit the game perfectly and give it an overall more arcade-y feel. They're simple, colourful and well defined, but they do allow for some slight improvement. The sound wasn't terribly noticeable really, a bit like a soundtrack in an action movie when you're concentrating so hard on the action that the ears tend to close themselves off to the outside world. So suitably suitable sound effects, graphically graphic graphics, nothing immensely stunning really. But the game contains a real element which is not found too often nowadays — FUN. Three letters, but vitally important to any game.

So from now on for me, it's goodbye eighteen directional scrolling, Hubbard-tronic music and hyperpan-chickensoupo-nasal rays. It's funtime again for me, and well, *Solly* is the perfect answer: it's groovey, addictive and a lot of other boring things I could say which would fall victim to Mike's red biro — but I think you've all probably got the message.

Mark Patterson

◀ Build your own platforms.

▼ There's the exit.



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall



Those bouncing balls just keep coming faster and faster on the bonus level.



Somersault out of danger — most dramatic move ever dreamt of in a beat 'em up.

INTERNATION

COMMODORE USER SUPERSTAR

64/128
System 3
Price:
£9.99/cass
£12.99/disk

Dust off your white pyjamas and grab a sturdy joystick or two. The cream of the beat 'em ups is back — with a vengeance Archer Maclean has taken *International Karate*, enhanced it considerably, and the result is a beat 'em up which puts most arcade games of the same genre to shame.

The most obvious improvement is the addition of a third computer-controlled player — and what a difference it makes! There were three fighters in the Atari ST version of *International Karate*, but Archer insists this was his idea in the first place and would have been implemented in the Commodore 64 original had he had more time. Not that he needed to . . . *International Karate* was excellent, and this sequel is considerably more playable than Andromeda's ST conversion of the original.

The fighting takes place in front of an incredible fully animated backdrop, in which the sun's reflection distorts realistically with the ripples in the lake below. Just to add to the serenity of the scene, birds occasionally fly past, fish leap out of the water, a spider hangs from either the tree or the archway, and a small worm makes its way across the screen!

There are a stunning seventeen different moves available, including the more standard array of kicks and punches, plus three new moves — an athletic backflip, a headbutt and a double head kick. The animation and feel of the high kick has been improved, so the fighter now steps when he turns to kick.

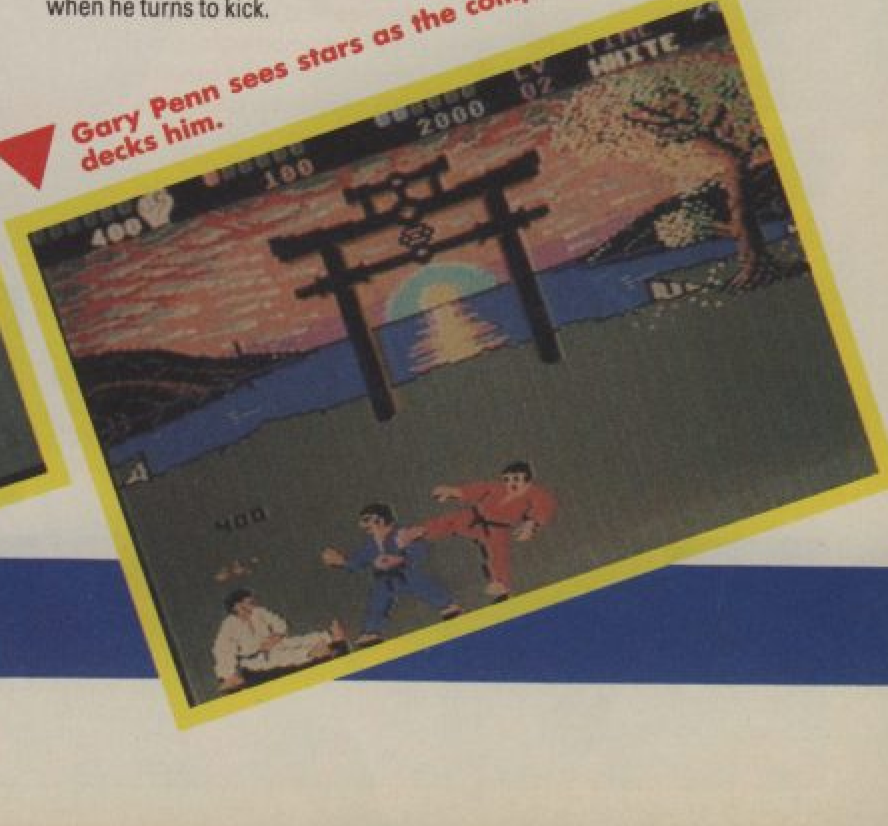
As in *International Karate*, points are awarded for knocking out the opposition. Each knockout earns the attacker either one or two combat points (depending on whether the victim was hit from either in front or behind) and increases their numerical score, depending on the type of move successfully executed.

A bout ends when a fighter attains all six combat points, or failing this when the 30 second time limit expires. A mystical judge then appears and decides who is first, second and third, based on the fighters' combat points — the fighter, in third place is out of the game and is replaced by a computer controlled fighter. In the event of a tie, the numerical score achieved

The first animated back drop in a beat 'em up — worth watching closely for jumping fish, spiders spinning webs and other surprises.



Gary Penn sees stars as the computer warrior decks him.





▲ Wallop! — one is floored already and the other gets it in the gob. That's scrapping.



▲ More fighters than you've had hot dinners — and a nice sun set too.

NAL KARATE+

during the bout determines the winner. However, if the numercial scores are the same, both players stay in.

Survive two bouts of fast and furious fighting and you can attempt to earn extra points in the bonus stage. Armed only with a shield, the idea is to deflect or avoid the balls which bounce onscreen at three different heights — and on later bonus stages, flashing balls which bounce at unpredicatable heights. 100 points are awarded for each ball deflected, and a bonus of 500 points is given should you survive the onslaught of 64 balls.

Archer has also included a few new 'cute' touches . . . leave the fighter alone for long enough and his trousers fall down, much to their wearer's surprise! The same effect can be achieved by pressing two keys — but we won't tell you which two just yet. The colour of the sea, sky and the sun's reflection can be changed by pressing a few keys, and you can even affect the way that the water ripples!



▲ Even hard karate men drop their trousers occasionally.

Rob Hubbard's remix of the *IK* music complements the action perfectly, and the digitised grunts and groans are somehow beefier and more effective than those in the original. Archer's graphics are also of an extremely high standard — the backdrop is a delight to behold, and the fighters move smoothly and are beautifully animated.

International Karate + is undoubtedly the best beat 'em up available for any home computer, surpassing even its highly acclaimed predecessor with considerable ease. An absolute must for fighting fans everywhere.

Gary Penn

▼ Seventeen possible moves in this best ever beat 'em up.

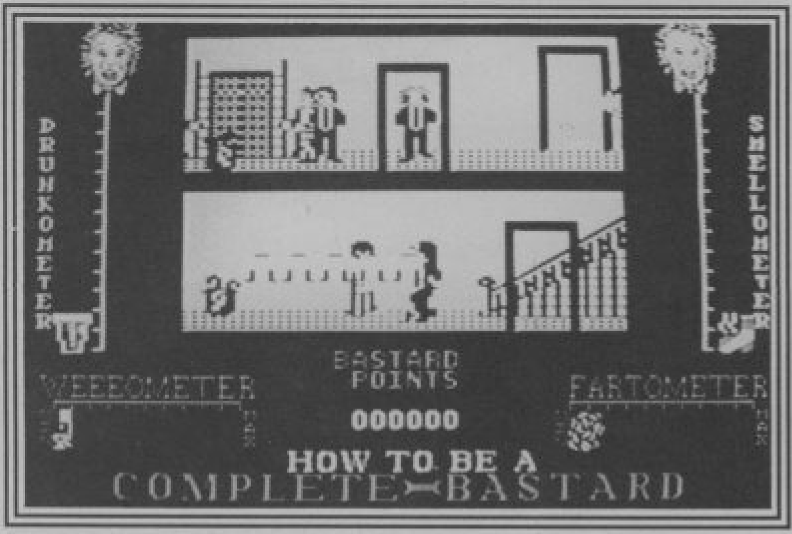


Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9 Overall



1 ITS THE 4TH JULY AND THE NATION IS SET FOR AN ALMIGHTY CELEBRATION.
2 INTO THE COMPARENT CALM OF THE WHITE HOUSE BURSTS THE MANIC DR. MEGALOMANN. "STEP DOWN MR PRESIDENT, SUBMIT TO MY RULE OR TODAY AMERICA WILL KNOW A PLAGUE FROM WHICH DEATH WILL SEEM A HAPPY RELEASE".
SCREENSHOTS FROM COMMODORE VERSION.
HI KIDS! NO TIME TO LOSE. C.I.A. SAY THERE'S AN UNIDENTIFIED MISSILE LOCATED IN AN UNDERGROUND SILO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CALIFORNIAN DESERT. MUST BE THE ONE! CLIMB ABOARD THE SKY CYCLE. TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE THE FREE WORLD. GOD SAVE AMERICA!
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▲ **Nothing like a spot of yuppie bashing.**

Getting drunk is accomplished pretty easily. You just go to the fridge and drink vast amounts of Monster Get Pissed Fast Lager, of which there are unlimited quantities.

Similarly, unlimited quantities of curry can be found in the cooker. Eating curry builds up your fart powder — as indicated on the fartometer. When you have built up sufficient quantities of fartpower you can let rip with some really guffy pumps and clear the room as well as increasing your general level of smelliness.

Drinking vast quantities of Monster Get Pissed Fast Lager not spin uncontrollably. Eating all the curry results in a fart of mega proportions which, presumably ignited by the cooker, causes a huge explosion killing everyone in sight. Not even you can survive having your bottom blown off.

Apart from drinking, eating curry, weeing and farting there are other things you can and must do to earn the title of complete bastard. The cupboards, fittings and furniture in each room contain varous things which can be used for bastardly deeds. You have to watch out though, there are many things, like yoghurt, coleslaw and barbecue

How to be a complete BASTARD

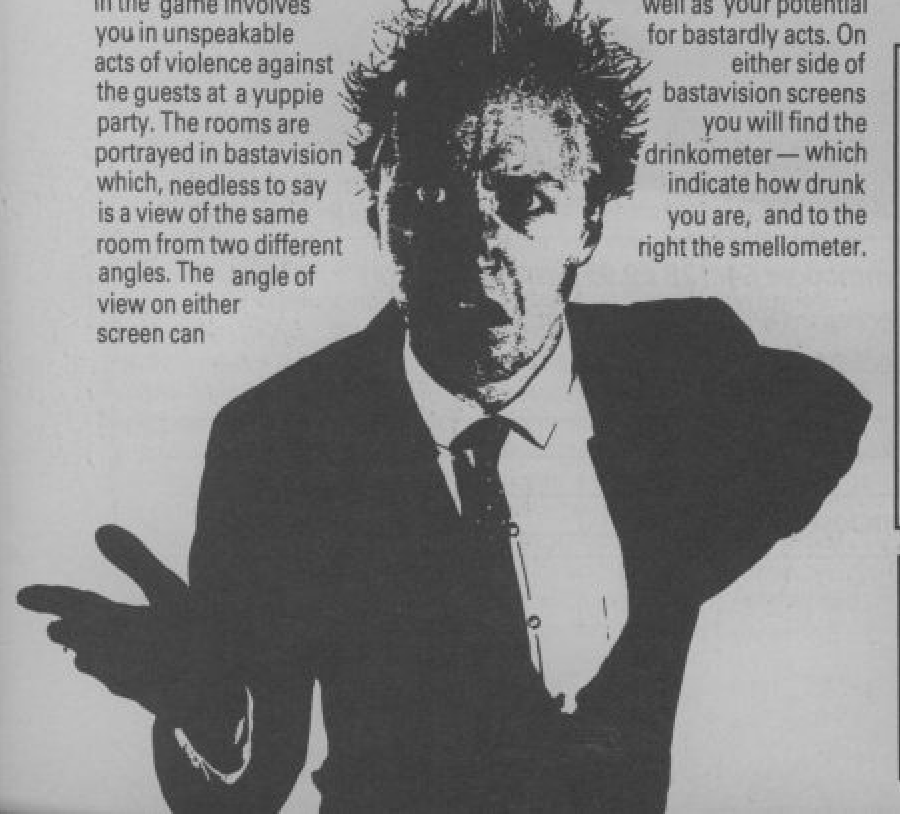
64/128 Virgin Games Price: £9.95 cass

Ade Edmonston is, without doubt a complete bastard. At least he admits it. According to Ade, if you go out and by his game, you can become a complete bastard. According to me, if you buy it, that makes you nothing more than a complete dickbrain. You see, I too can be a complete bastard, I don't have to try.

Being a complete bastard in the game involves you in unspeakable acts of violence against the guests at a yuppie party. The rooms are portrayed in bastavision which, needless to say is a view of the same room from two different angles. The angle of view on either screen can be rotated by 90 degrees, so you can look at yourself from in front and behind, or more usefully the front and side view.

To begin with you have no ammunition with which to perform bastardly deeds, these can be picked up along the way. At the bottom of the screen the words 'complete bastard' appear. To finish the game you just illuminate each of the letters by performing deeds of the utmost bastardliness on the guests, forcing them to leave the room. Only the worst possible deeds will cause the letters to remain lit, less bastardly actions will illuminate them for a short time only.

Various meters indicate your general physical state as well as your potential for bastardly acts. On either side of bastavision screens you will find the drinkometer — which indicate how drunk you are, and to the right the smellometer.



only gets you lashed fast — you'll want to wee at every opportunity. Don't waste time looking for the toilet (though some fun can be had there with the clingfilm and super glue), head for the nearest tree. The weeometer rises as you drink more and more lager. Weeing not only brings it down to a more comfortable level, you get lots of points for it.

A word of caution. When you go to the fridge, or cooker, or whatever, you are given several options. For example you can drink some of the lager, all of it, or leave it well alone. In this game pigging yourself is a bad mistake. Too much beer causes the bottom bastavision screen to food no self-respecting bastard would go near.

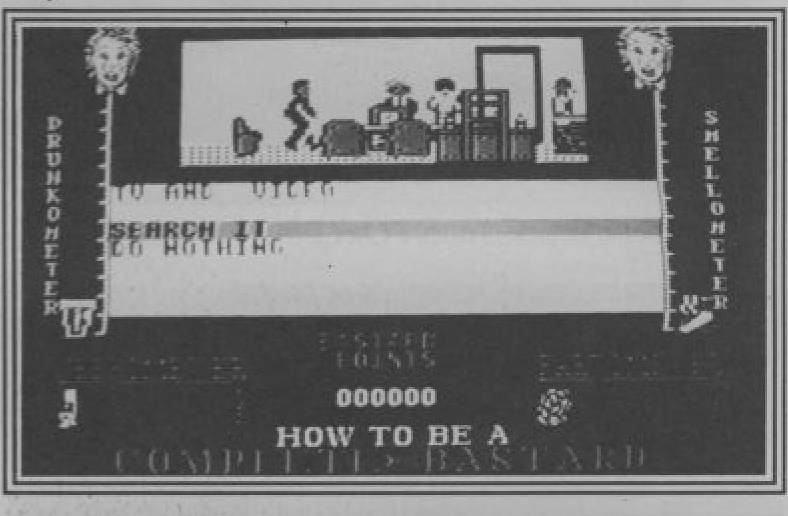
Good bastard material includes the hammer, itching powder, toothpaste, shaving cream, darts and whoopee cushions. You'll have to experiment to find the best way of using these. The umbrella isn't all that useful. Opening it indoors turned my Ade sprite into a tree, though whether that was meant to happen is anyone's guess.

I was looking forward to being a complete bastard, but it turned out to be complete disappointment.

Be a real complete bastard — don't buy it.

Ken (the bastard) McMahon

▼ **Investigate the rooms for useful objects.**



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4 Overall



Action Force © 1987 Milton Bradley International Inc

Gang of Five meet Action Force™. Virgin's Gang of Five have created the excitement of an Action Force™ adventure for your computer.

COBRA, the enemy, are attacking the military installation on the island of Botsneda. A.W.E Striker has been enlisted for the dangerous mission of rescuing classified information from the war-torn eastern sector.

Your part in the mission is to cover A.W.E Striker from the air. In the Spectrum version you are Snake Eyes, air-borne with a helipack. In the Commodore version you control Dragonfly helicopter. Both feature smooth scrolling, excellent graphics and fast arcade action that Gang of Five are famous for. You must clear a safe path for A.W.E Striker to successfully complete the mission.

Commodore 64/128 cassette £9.95, Spectrum 48/128 cassette £9.95 Spectrum + 3 disc £14.95



Dragonfly must quickly avoid a joint attack from F.A.N.G. and a land-based missile.

Commodore



Snake Eyes forges ahead to clear a safe path for A.W.E Striker.

Spectrum

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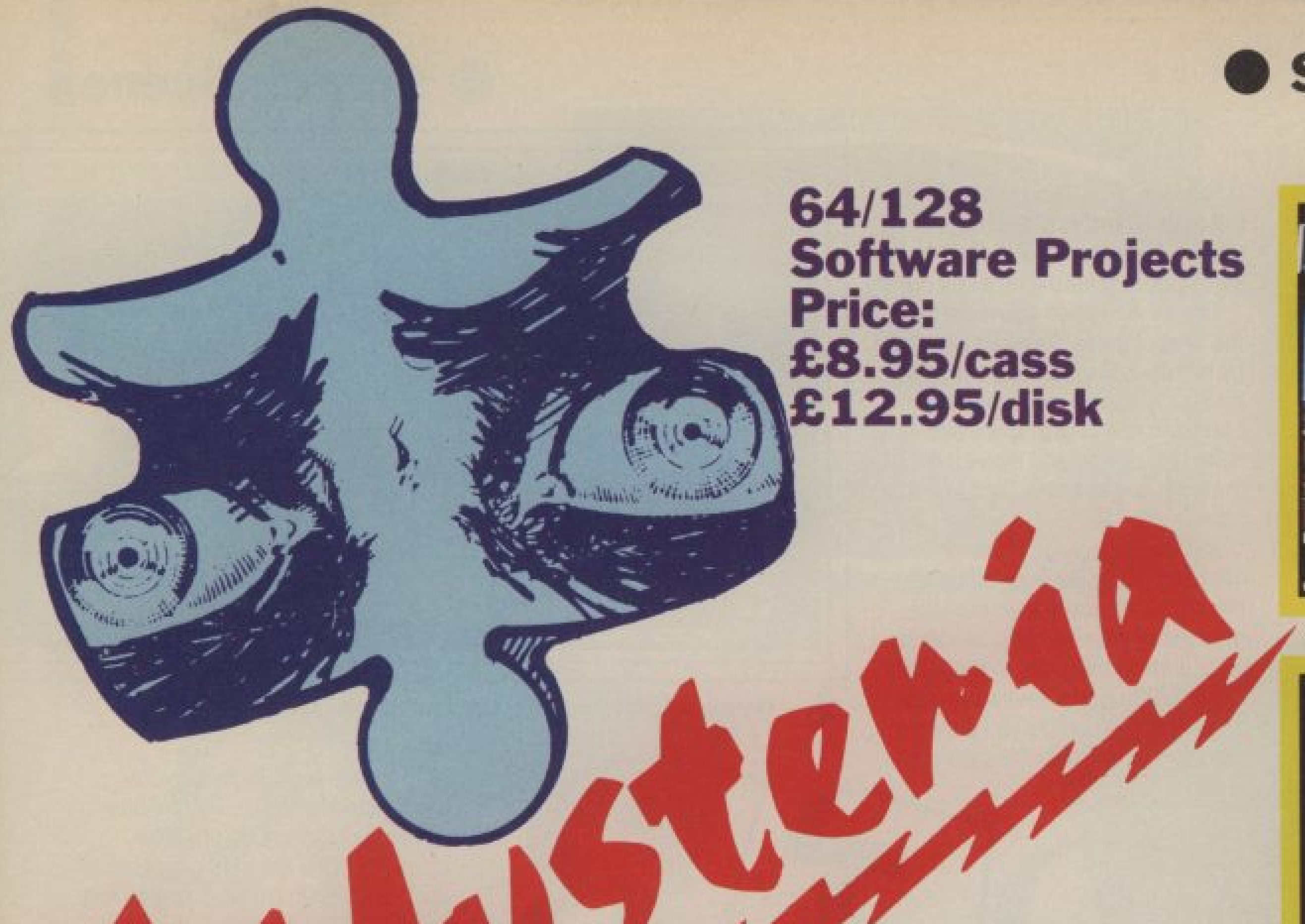
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64/128
Software Projects
Price:
£8.95/cass
£12.95/disk





C.U. Screen Star



Stage Two the mediaeval walls.

A group of fanatics are undermining society by changing the distant past, and they've summoned forth a monstrous primaeval entity to do their work.

Only a crack agent from the elite Time Corps can outwit them, by travelling back into the past and battling the entity wherever it can be found.

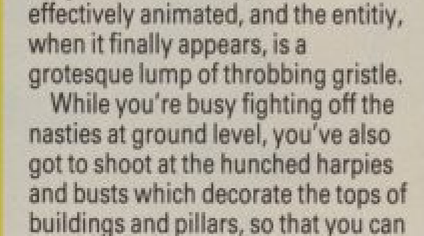
Ring any bells? Well, it's a plot not a million years removed from that of Virgin's inept *Falcon: The Renegade Lorde* (reviewed CU, July), but whereas Falcon was a witless rag-bag of worn-out arcade sequences, is a minor masterpiece of animated graphics and timing.

In each time zone there are certain hostile characters and objects which, when destroyed, leave behind a lemon or a jigsaw piece. The lemons allow the on-screen weapon icons to be accessed, so that lightning bolts or energy arrows can be selected, or even a jet pack. The jigsaw pieces are collected until the portrait of one of the evil fanatics is completed, whereupon the entity is forced to appear and engage the Time Agent in a bloody battle to the finish. If the entity is defeated, then the scene shifts to the next time zone, and the whole thing starts again.

Software Projects don't waste much time explaining all this, and before you know it you've been transported back to Ancient Greece, dropped amongst the temples and statues, and your muscle-bound figure is being beseiged on both sides by rampant centaurs and dagger-wielding skeletons which erupt from the stony ground.

Programmers Tony Pomfret and Karen 'Art' Davies (ex-Denton Designs) have employed a sophisticated form of parallax scrolling, so that as your He-man type figure runs to left or right, the background scenery scrolls at a slower rate than objects in the foreground. All the sprites, whether galloping horses, harpies or dragons, are minutely and effectively animated, and the entitiy, when it finally appears, is a grotesque lump of throbbing gristle.

While you're busy fighting off the nasties at ground level, you've also got to shoot at the hunched harpies and busts which decorate the tops of buildings and pillars, so that you can pick up the lemons and puzzle segments. But some are so high that you'll need to use the jet-pack, while others can be knocked off their perches by the revolving rocks which spin round your head whenever the 'dog' icon is selected.



And the monster which awaits you at the end.

If you're going to succeed at all, then you're going to have to be very quick on the draw. Put up your shield when all else fails, conserve as much energy as possible, and at all times plan your moves. It's essential that when the entity materialises you're armed with energy arrows at least, and ideally a jet-pack as well.

Level two, set in some sort of mediaeval locations, is more of the same, with archers and dragons combining forces with the mythological beasts from level one.

Three levels might not seem like very many, but it's certainly enough for most gamesters, and probably more than enough for some. And the programming team have added lots of slick techniques, including an impressive hi-score routine and a tasteful death scene, in which your warrior explodes into giant, bouncing soap bubbles. Plus there's nifty music and good, reverberating sound effects.

Hysteria is an extremely polished variation on what is really a very old theme. It proves that you don't need 125 levels to make a game challenging. A mere three will do if the difficulty factor has been set right.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8
Overall

Commodore 64/128
Firebird Gold
Price: £2.99/ cassette

HYPER BLOBS

The current trendy thing for software publishers to do seems to be launching more labels than games. Firebird are the latest to follow the trend with another budget label, 299 Gold. This is the first Commodore release: will it live up to its gold title and be 24 carat or is it only plated?

The blobpods are on a poschool holiday on the planet Cubos (a wee place in the 27½th dimension). The strange thing about the blobpods is they all have a dinosaur-like intelligence (i.e. they're all thicker than school custard).

So as their teacher, trip organiser and acting minder off you set. Your job is primarily to make sure that these blobpod retards all return from their school holiday in one piece, which won't be easy!! The main problem is that the architect of the planet Cubos was obviously also a renowned divvy and built the whole landscape out of cubes. The blobpods must bounce across these cubes from left to right continuously, and your job is to stop any obstructing cubes or to stop them falling down any gaps in the landscape. Well, this is a tough job, but your record as a teacher wouldn't look too cool if you let eight kiddie-pods die on a day out!!

The way in which you must save the lives of these brainless brats is by manipulating a cursor arrow in front of where these Blobpods are bouncing and pressing fire over any cube to pick it up and move it out of the way (you can only hold four at a time).

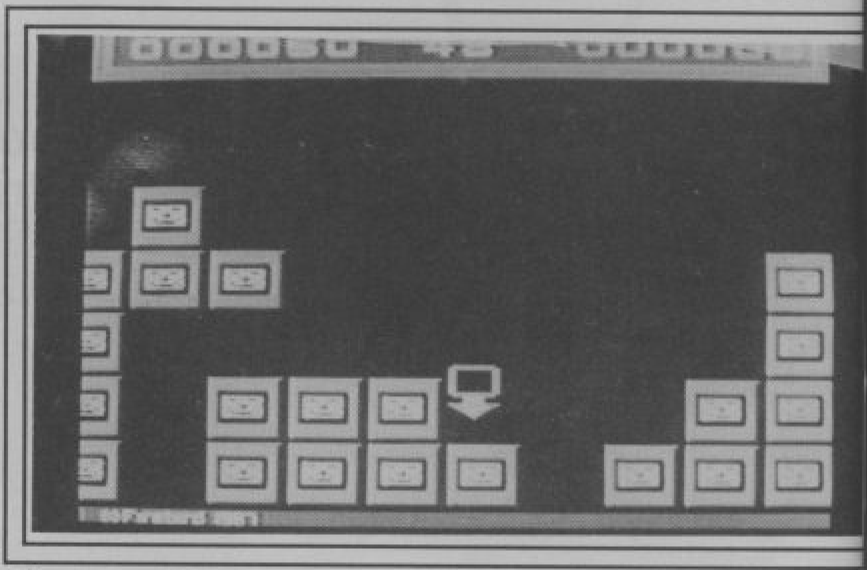
Strategically moving the obstructing blocks in order to beat the time limit you are set isn't the greatest of your worries: harder by far is closing the gaps. In the earlier of the one hundred levels the gaps are fairly small but as you get on to the other later levels the gaps are positively huge. To close the gaps you must first pick up the amount of blocks needed (once again, maximum four), then press fire over where you wish to put them down. As you can imagine all this must be done in an awful rush so the blobpods don't reach the gap before you fill it. On later levels what you really must do is put a few cubes down first and try to fence the pupils in so you can release them when the roadwork has been done.

And, as if that wasn't enough to keep you busy, the cubes themselves are also against you. Some cubes will eat the blobpods if touched. Some can't be picked up. Some, once picked up, can't be put back down. Happily there are also a few that give you bonus points (Woo!!).

There are eight blobpods you must guide to safety. There's one particularly annoying one who doesn't get his ass in to gear until all the others have crossed, something which doesn't help you time limit one little bit. Your game is over once all the blobpods have died (and so, I imagine, is your teaching career). And there's a rather dull little bonus level every four sheets which gives you the chance to improve your score.

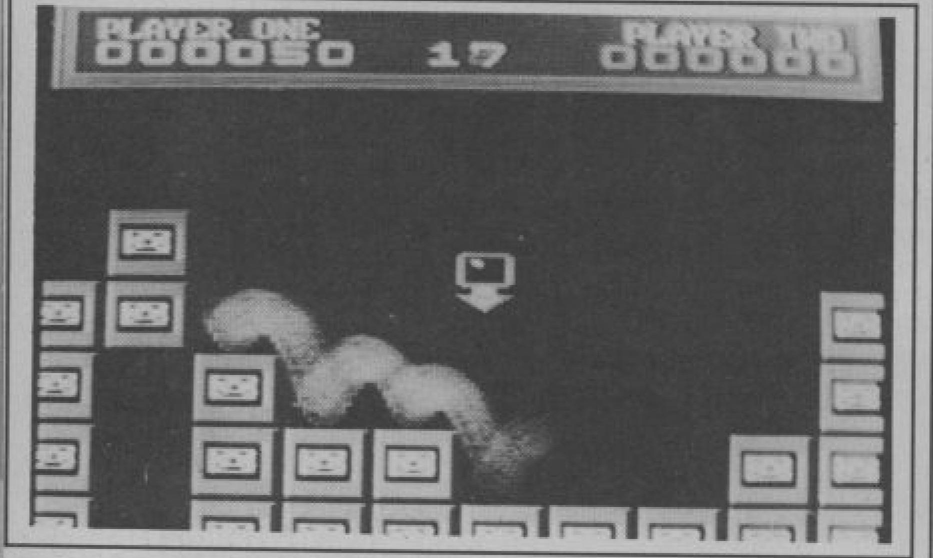
Hyperblobs is O.K., but then there are a lot of O.K. budget games, and most of them are a quid cheaper — better value for money than the new Hoddle & Waddle single, but not as much of a snip as a C.U. binder.

Ferdy Hamilton

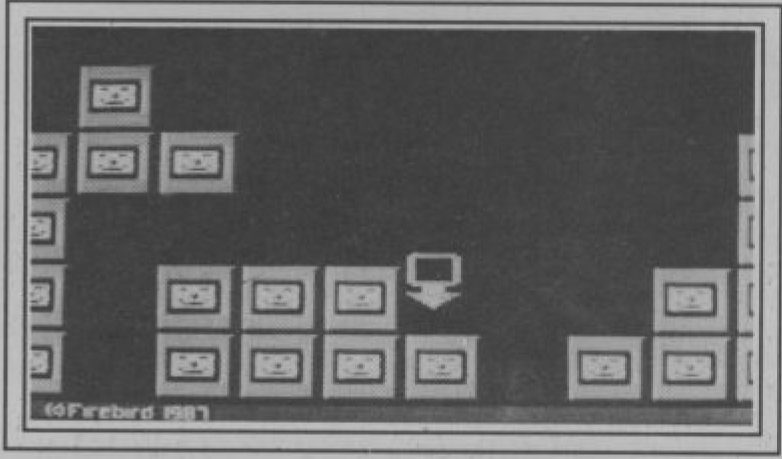


▲ **Hyperblobs-simple and original arcade game.**

▼ **The snake-like blur is a row of bouncing heads.**

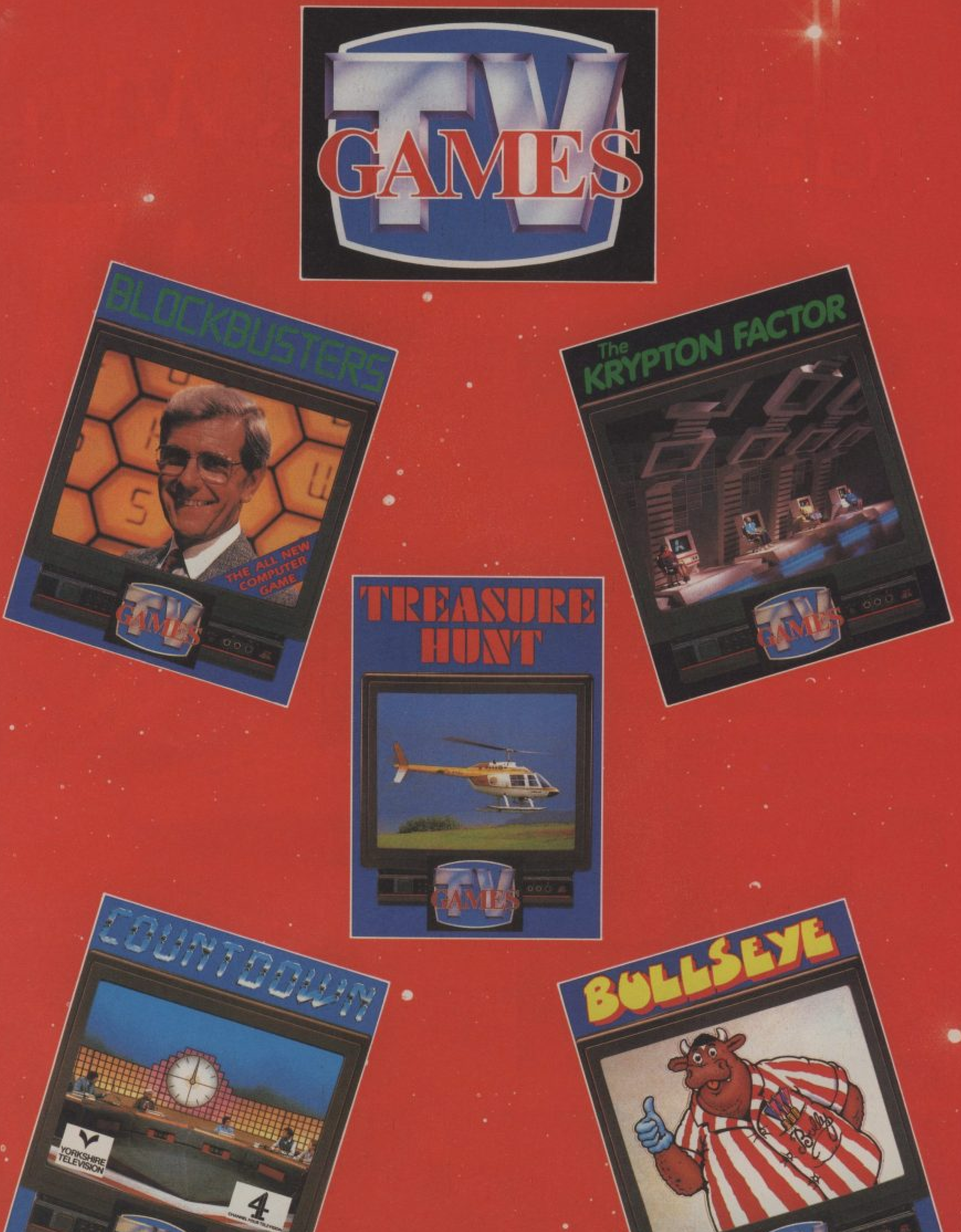


▼ **Ferdy gives an average reception to Firebird's first £2.99 title.**

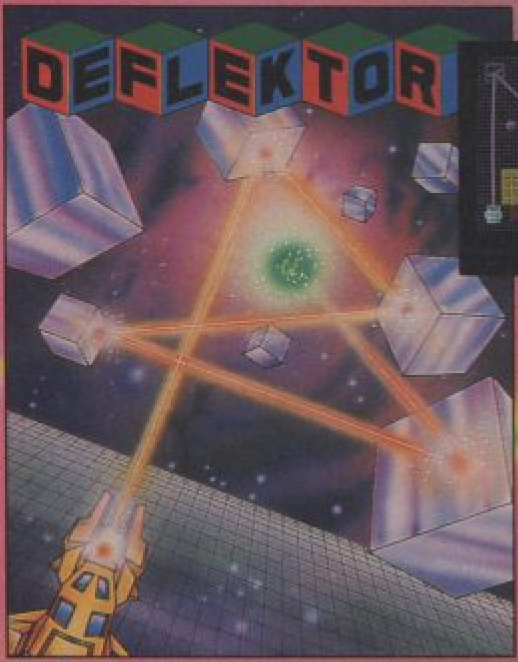


Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 Overall


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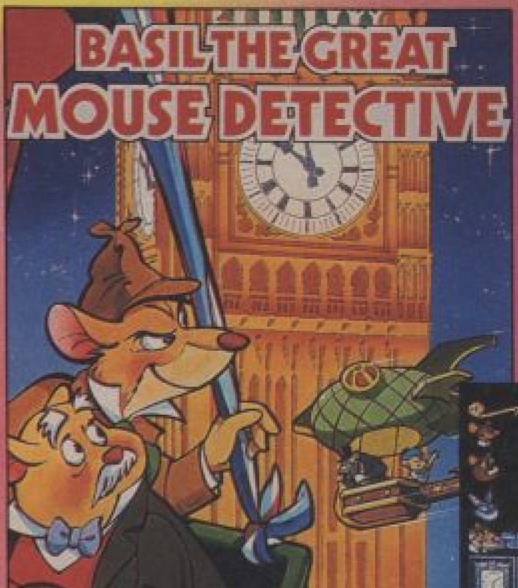




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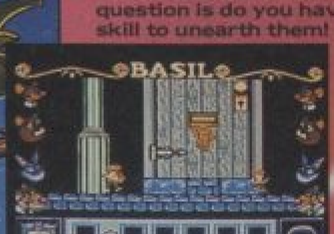
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From the basement of 221b Baker Street, Basil and his faithful bloodhound Toby venture forward in search of the dastardly Ratigans hideout where poor Dr. Dawson is held against his will. What clues do they uncover amongst London's famous landmarks? What disguises do they adopt in moving around the rodent underworld? It's elementary my dear enthusiast, the answers are in the game. The question is do you have the skill to unearth them!



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▲ Pick a game from the vaults.

ARCADE CLASSICS

Firebird
Price: £1.99/ cassette

CHEAPO (of the month)

I remember when I were a lad — at t'Polytechnic — t'were greeet playing 'ont *Space Invaders* machine int' Students' Union bar. Aye, lad, them were the days. 10p it cost yer — you could buy pint, veggie currie from Poly buttery — 'ave three goes ont' Invaders and still 'ave change out of a quid. Naye, lad, they don't make games like that these days — all them flash sit-down jobs that shake yer beer around inside yer and touch yer for a quid a go. (*"Hello, is that the ed — can you please stop trying to write in a Yorkshire accent — you're hopeless at it" v. angry CU reader in Sheffield.*)

OK, OK, I'll stop, but I won't stop going on about how marvellous *Invaders* seemed when it first came out. It was the first sci-fi computer game and immediately hooked millions of players. You could play it almost everywhere — coffee bars, railway stations, pubs — the papers even carried stories about people installing them in their front rooms. That was ten years ago. Since then a revolution has taken place in computer entertainment and comparing *Invaders* to *After Burner* and *Out Run* is like comparing a Vic 20 to an Amiga.

So what's the game about — don't tell me you're too young!? — well, OK, sprogettes, I'll explain it to you. There are these rows and rows of aliens edging down-screen towards your gun turret. You have to move right and left and shoot 'em before they invade your base. The action speeds up as you wipe wave after wave of aliens and it all happens to the accompaniment of a trudging, rhymic heart beat-style pounding noise.

Every so often a larger ship bleeps across the top of the screen. This is the one you've really got to get if you want to earn mega scores. A great humming siren noise is your reward for slipping a missile into its mid-riff.

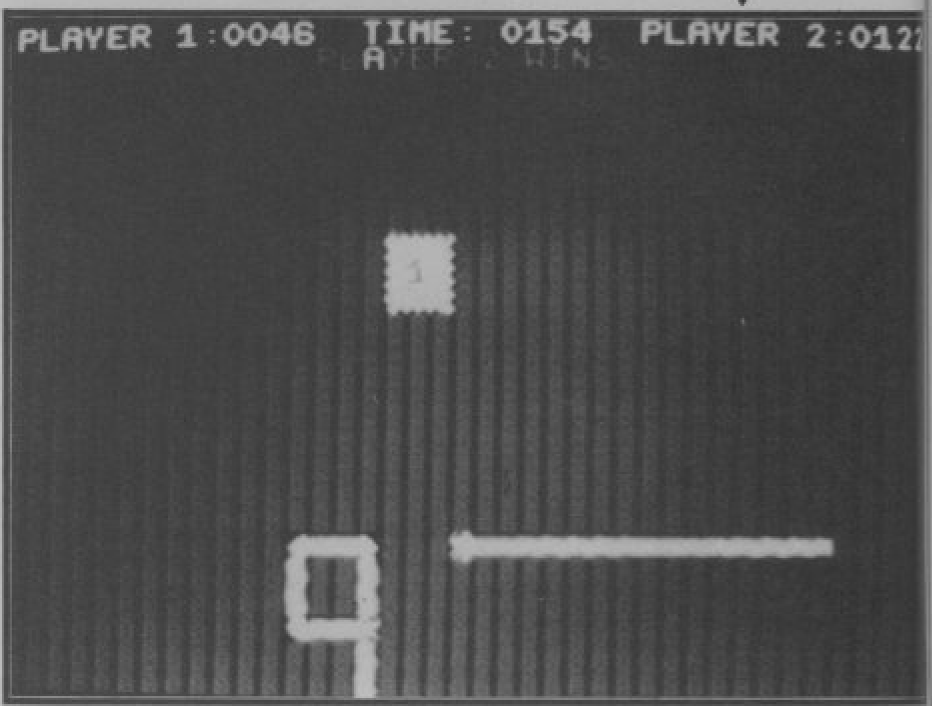
The game features the normal two-player option — so that you can play solo or against a friend. I did neither but instead had a game against Mike Pattenden who I stuffed completely. I wouldn't normally have mentioned it but he asked me to (*liar! MP*).

There is more to *Arcade Classics* than just *Invaders*. It also features a version of *Asteroids* — a particularly average one though, and a version of the maze game *Snakes* — where your slithering creatures traverse the screen eating this and that.

The fourth game is a simple shoot 'em up called *Space War*. Nothing to write home about this one. All in all, though, you are getting pretty excellent value here — four games for less than 50p each. Best of all, though, is the chance to play *Invaders* again. *Arcade Classics* is worth two quid for this alone. Pure nostalgia — pure fun.

Eugene Lacey

Slither slickly in Snakes. ▼



▼ Now, where have you seen *this* before?



GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE:	8
VALUE:	9
OVERALL:	8

CHEAPO (of the month)

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WATER POLO



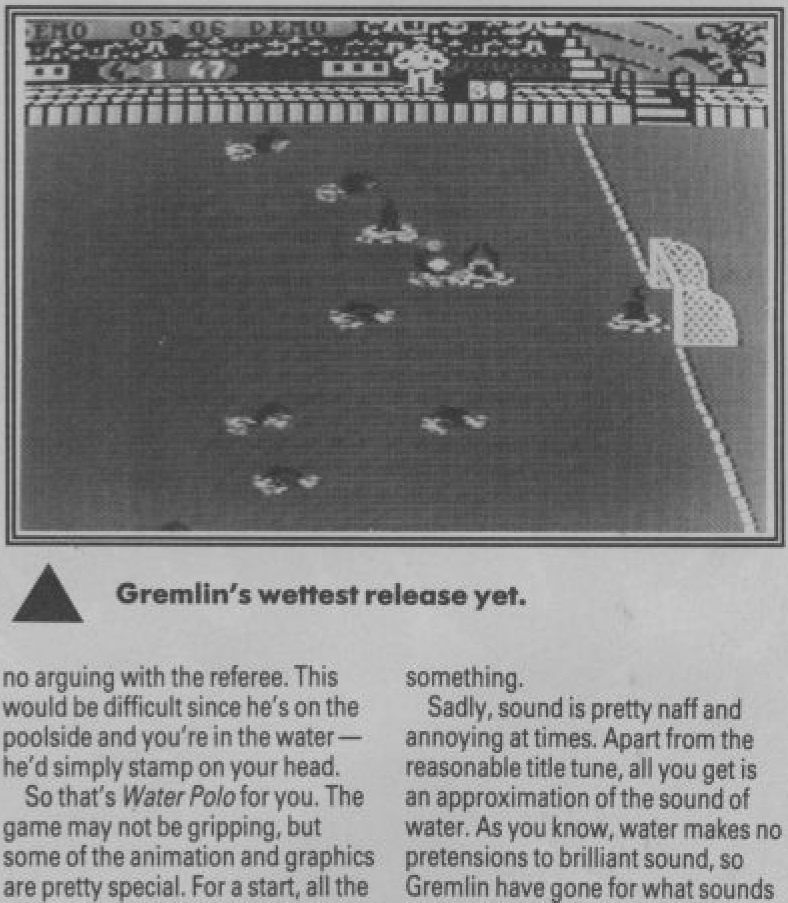
64/128
Gremlin Graphics
Price: £9.95/cass

Water polo is a waterlogged version of basketball. Instead of slam dunks you just get dunk dunks. The spectator element amounts to watching what look like a load of apples bobbing up and down in a bowl. The main attraction for the players is that they don't need to take a bath afterwards.

Despite this lack of sporting charisma Gremlin have chosen to simulate water polo in a computer game called *Water Polo*. The main similarity between *Water Polo* and water polo is that they are both pretty boring.

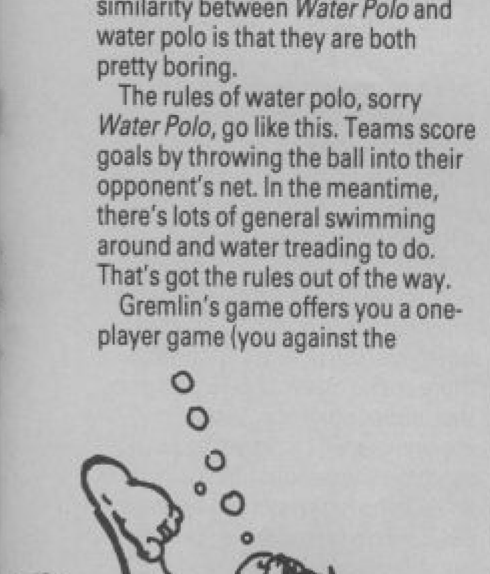
The rules of water polo, sorry *Water Polo*, go like this. Teams score goals by throwing the ball into their opponent's net. In the meantime, there's lots of general swimming around and water treading to do. That's got the rules out of the way.

Gremlin's game offers you a one-player game (you against the computer, a two-player option — by far the most satisfying) and a championship option that involves four teams in a play-off. Games involve four quarters of five minutes each, and you can vary the skill levels.



The game sticks to the well-worn traditional of allowing only one player per team to be under joystick control, always the two players nearest the ball. You can spot them because their shower caps miraculously change colour — must be something in the water.

The player without the ball can move in any of eight directions, whilst the player with the ball can both move and shoot. Direction, power and flight of the ball is also joystick controlled in more or less the usual way. But it's not as streamlined as in some of the Epyx spots sims.



▲ **Gremlin's wettest release yet.**

As soon as your player has the ball, he holds it up above his head. Pressing the firebutton makes him wave it, ready for a pass to another player or a shot. Whilst holding the firebutton down, you push the joystick in the desired direction and quickly press the firebutton again. The player then executes a shot. You can produce fast and low shots, short but high ones, and spin the ball in either direction.

But don't think you can play patsy at the back. Your team must make a shot inside 35 seconds or the ball immediately goes over to the other side. There are strict rules about fouling too. You can grab the ball only from the front. Try it from behind and you commit a foul — three fouls and you're in the sin bin for 90 seconds or until the next goal is score. Unlike some sports there's no arguing with the referee. This would be difficult since he's on the poolside and you're in the water — he'd simply stamp on your head.

So that's *Water Polo* for you. The game may not be gripping, but some of the animation and graphics are pretty special. For a start, all the players are constantly bobbing up and down, and you see ripples in the water around them. They're pretty good at swimming too, gliding around the pool doing a crawl. The ball moves well too, bouncing and skidding off the surface of the water when you play a low shot.

Scrolling is smooth and the screen shows about two-thirds of the pool, with the referee pacing up and down the poolside, keeping up with play. Funnily enough, the spectators bob up and down just like the players — the mainstand must be flooded or something.

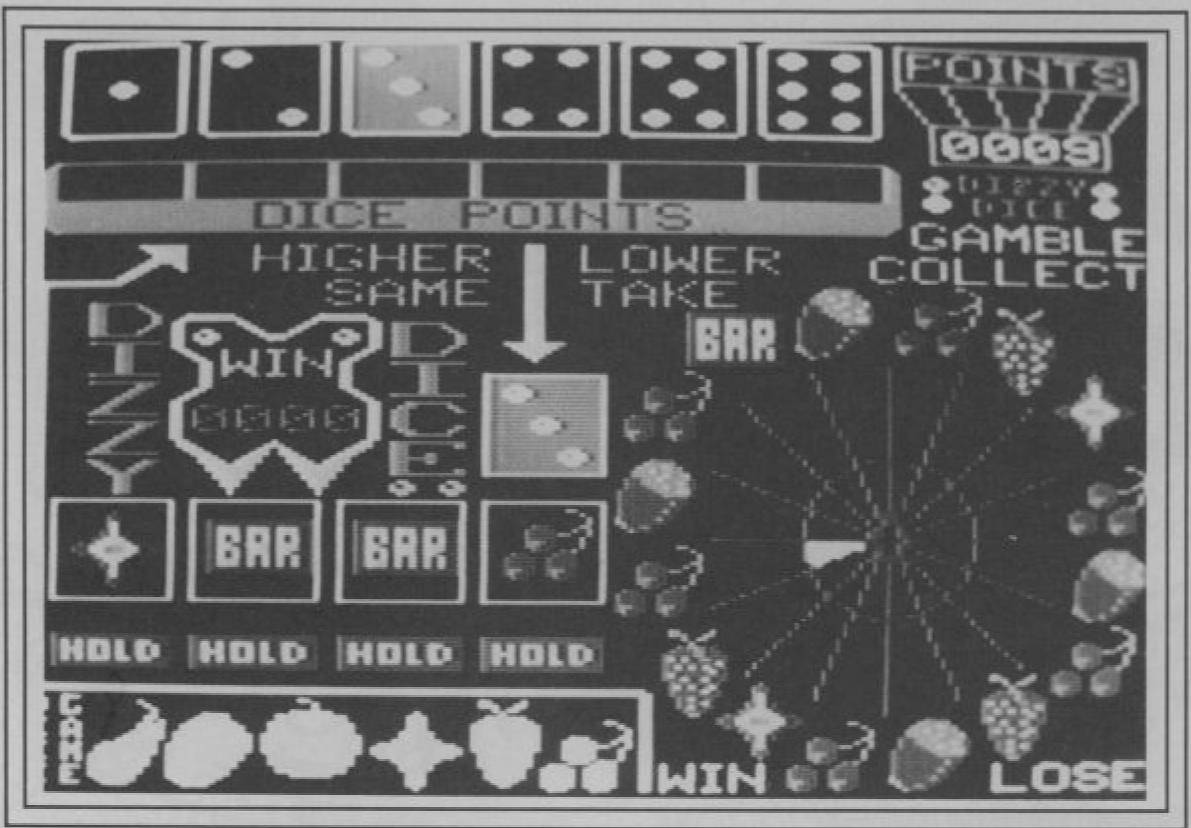
Sadly, sound is pretty naff and annoying at times. Apart from the reasonable title tune, all you get is an approximation of the sound of water. As you know, water makes no pretensions to brilliant sound, so Gremlin have gone for what sounds like a constantly flushed toilet, permeated by the occasional ear piercing referee's whistle — ouch.

Apart from the graphics, I didn't like *Water Polo* very much. The joystick movements never gave me the impression of being in control of my player and I never felt I could get more skillful at it by persevering. The two-player option is by far the most enjoyable (two-player games always are), play it by yourself and you'll find the whole thing pretty uninspired.

Bohdan Buciak

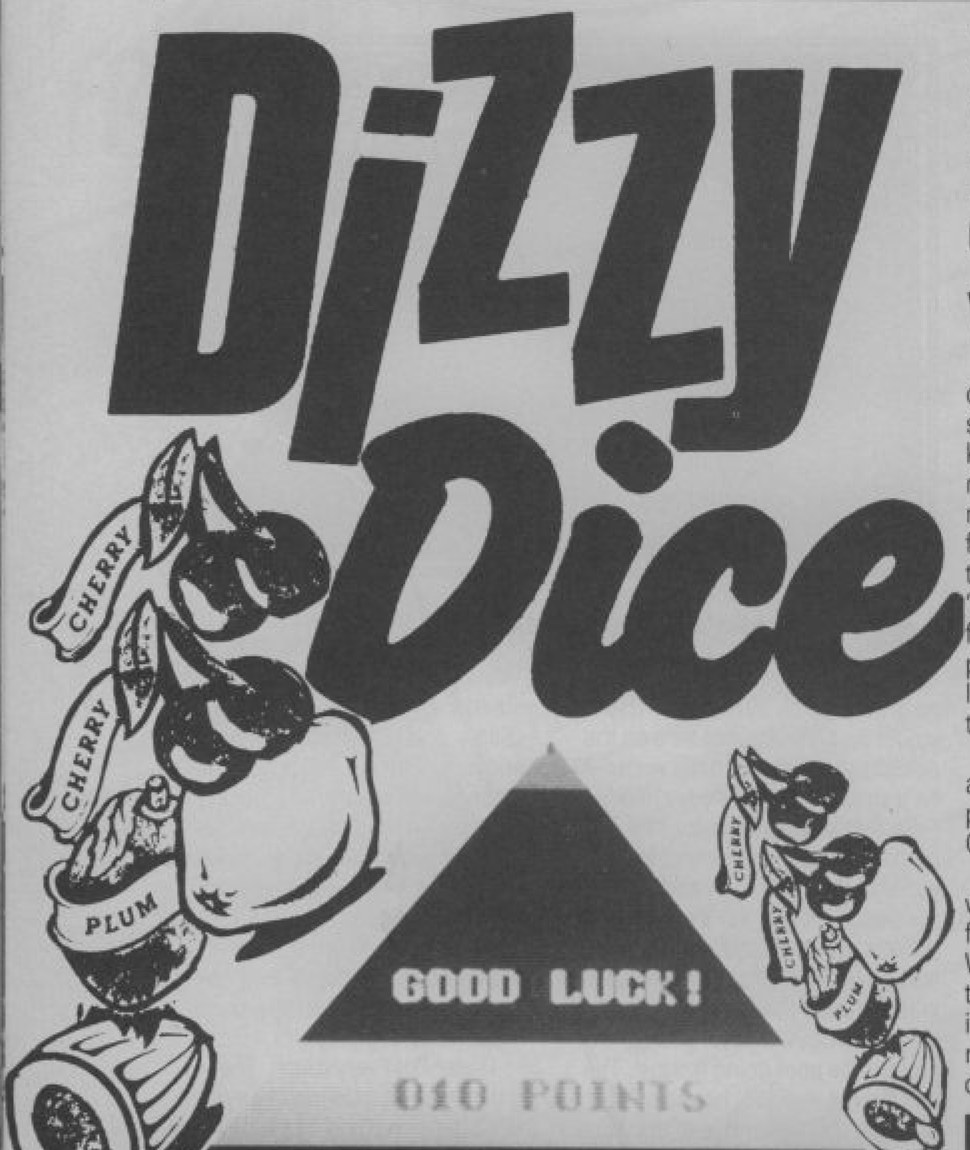
Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

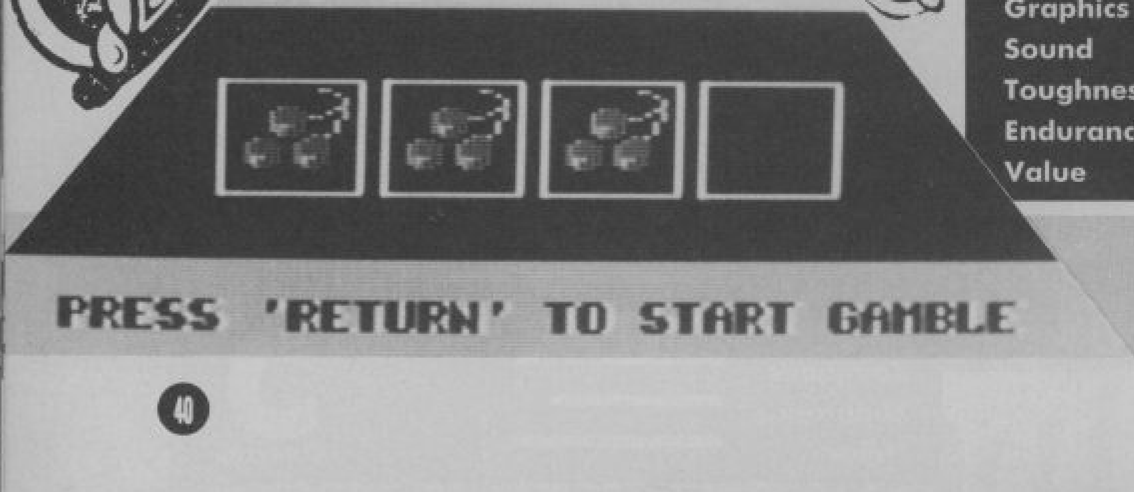
5 Overall



Dizzy Dice—enough to put you off gambling for life.

Dizzy Dice





Commodore 64/128
Price: £1.99/ Cassette

Whenever I feel an urge for some rather gristly meat shelled in stale pastry, complemented with some grease-soaked lumps of potato (commonly known as "pie 'n' chips") I pop into my local chippy. Once I've gorged myself on this coronary-inducing fare, I tend to stick my loose tens in the resident fruit machine. Those 'loose' tens soon become loose fiftys and they in turn become 'odd' pounds, until the point arrives when I am no longer in possession of my train fare home!

So it's no wonder I look upon this as a remedial and morally sound piece of software, as just what Gambler's Anonymous ordered.

I assume that every reader's wordly knowledge extends to what a fruit machine is. You don't? Oh dear! Well, every time you insert 10p the three (or four) reels spin around, and if the symbols (usually fruits) on the reels, land in one of the winning combinations, a sum of money (between 10p and £150) will fall around your feet. You can also gamble what you have won in an attempt to enlarge the sum.

This program aims to be the most realistic fruit machine game ever written. Well, perhaps. Certainly on the 64 it doesn't have much competition.

This game is of the four reel fruit machine variety. Spin the reels and we shall begin . . . the primary way of winning on one of these contraptions is to simply hope for the reels to land in one of the many winning combinations (unfortunately I can't tell you any of these as the instructions neglect to tell you!). Once the reels have spun you may get offered a 'Hold' feature, which allows you to hold any of the reels and spin the rest (particularly useful after a win!).

In this fruit machine readys are substituted the pale imitation of a points system. Each win awards you with a particular number of points, ranging from about two to a hundred.

Another way of winning is by some ridiculous and totally incomprehensible way, even to the hardened fruitie addict (such as I). Every now and again out of the blue you are awarded two points. After making a break to Monaco with your princely sum of two points you have the opportunity to gamble and hopefully increase your earnings (or compensate yourself for your losses). You may choose one of five fruits, each will give you the opportunity to multiply your money by amounts between 1.5 and 6. The bigger the mulitiplication factor on the symbol the smaller the probability of you winning. The gamble wheel then spins round and if it lands on your chosen fruit . . . YOU'RE A WINNER!

This may be the most realistic fruit machine game on the 64 at present, but that's 'cause to my knowledge there are no others. And I must state that, although I am a hardened money-waster, I have yet to see a machine this tedious, confusing or lame in the highways and byways. But if such a fruit machine does exist I strongly suspect it can be found in a greasy, Chinese chip shop, on the Holloway Road. Oh, and what ever happened to nudges . . .?

Ferdy Hamilton

Rating	Score (bar on 1–10 scale)
Graphics	5
Sound	2
Toughness	4
Endurance	2
Value	4
Overall	**4**

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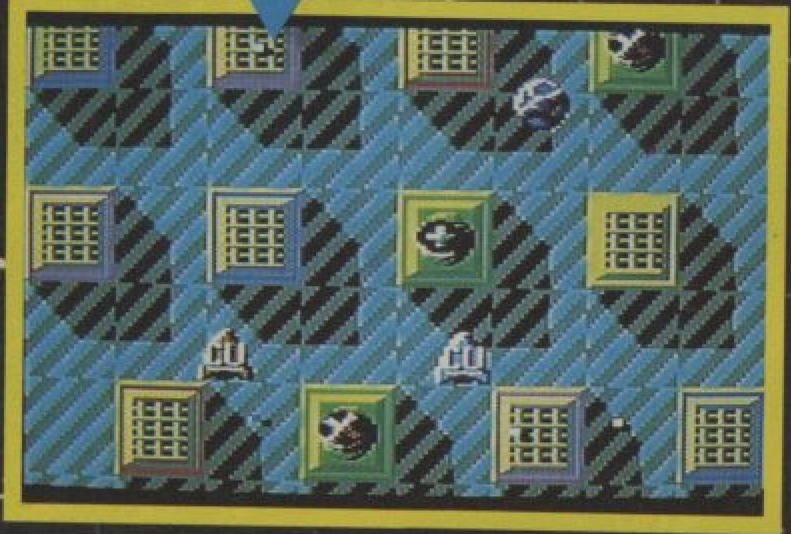
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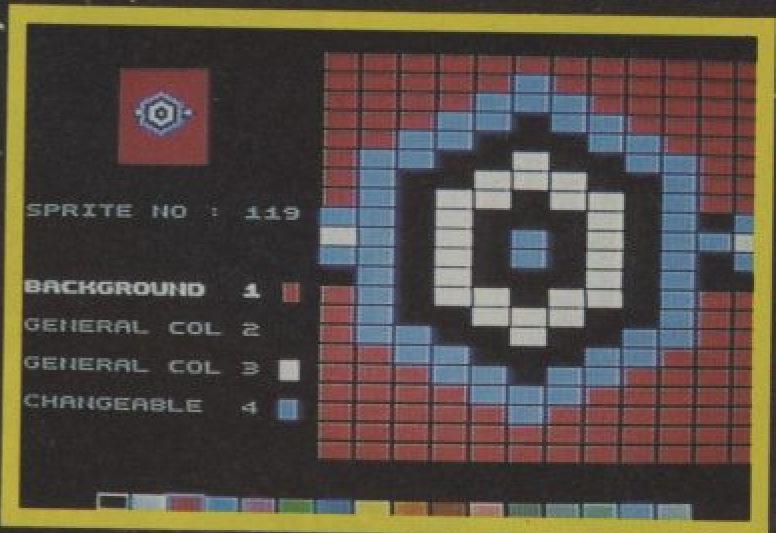
C64/128
Outlaw
Price:
£14.99/cass
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Design your own sprites . . .

If you've ever dreamt of writing your own games, or thought that you could make a better job of it than the profesionals, here's your chance In *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit*, or *SEUCK*, you decide on everything.

Of course we've seen a few game construction kits in the past like EA's *Pinball Construction Set* and Mirrorsoft's *Games Creator*. The trouble with the earlier efforts was that they were too limited. O.K. so you could alter a sprite here and there, mess around with the sound effects and fiddle with a few other parameters. But that wasn't the same thing as designing your own game and the end results were hardly any more exciting that what you had begun with.

SEUCK, goes well beyond those efforts, allowing you to design all aspects of your own shoot 'em up. It was designed for Outlaw by Sensible Sotfware whose previous successes include *Wizball* and *Parallax* so as you'd think, they know a thing or two about games design.

You don't have to be a programming prodigy to use it either, as, providing you approach it in an organised fashion, *SEUCK* is a powerful and easy-to-use tool. All the same, designing and creating your own game is going to involve more than an afternoon leisurely tapping at the keyboard. And, as with all games, its success or otherwise will depend just as much on the original idea as on the actual design and production. For those less ambitious four free games are supplied and you can mess about with these to your hearts desire.

SEUCK is entirely menu driven, options being selected either by joystick or initial letter keypress. The main menu offers options for editing sprites, background, objects, sound effects, player limitations, attack waves, levels, character set and front end. Selection of any these options will lead you to a further sub-menu offering more specific editing features.

Selecting "edit sprite" for example takes you into the powerful

. . . and Hey Presto! A DIY pterodactyl!



Pick your own backgrounds.



M UP
CTION KIT



▲ . . . animate em'. . .

sprite editor. This, as you would expect, allows you to make pixel, and colour changes, but also shows, and allows editing of, the complete sprite animation sequence. Other sprite editor facilities include a mirror option and sprite slide which allows you to move the image around within the sprite block.

Having designed your sprites you can give them a role within the game using the object editor. Here you assign numbers to the sprites with which are connected certain roles such as player 1 ship, player 1 bullet, and so on. This section also controls animation — how the object moves and where. This is where you would set up your player's ship to move left and right in response to the joystick. Similarly you could work out set patterns of movement for alien sprites and position them in the playing area. Furthermore you will have to specify how fast your aliens (or indians, or ducks, or whatever) will travel, how many points they are worth, when and where it will fire and what sound effects will be linked to it.

Which is as good a point as any to look at the sound effects or SFX facilities. This is probably the simplest and one of the most fun parts of *SEUCK* to play with, other than the finished game itself, of course. The parameters — wave form, attack, decay, release, pitch, and one or two others, can be varied by slider controls on a "mixing desk" sort of set up. You can experiment with four player 1 effects, including fire and explosion, four for player 2, eight alien fire effects and eight alien explosions, giving a total of 24 stored effects.

Probably the last major task to be carried out is to design the background. The background is made of 5×5 blocks of characters and you can design the individual characters, make up the blocks and place them on the game map.

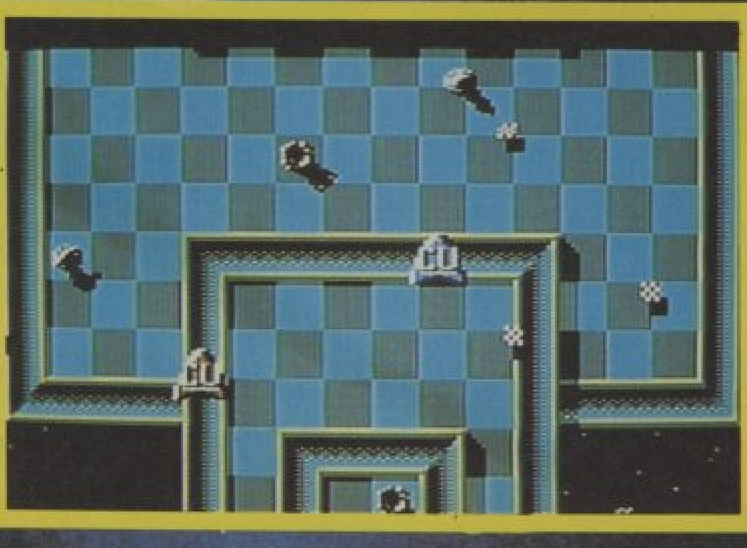
There are a few other essential elements that will need to be incorporated before you have a playable game. You might want to incorporate alien attack waves. You will also have to decide which parts of the screen you want to remain still and which parts should scroll and in what direction. Finally you would probably want to add a snazzy looking front end with a title screen and credits. It might also be an idea to periodically try out the 'test game' option just to see how things are progressing — they rarely turn out exactly as you expect.

SEUCK is itself a well thought out and designed game-creator's tool. If you've got an idea for a game, but don't have the programming skull to turn it into a reality, this is certainly one way to do it. And don't let any-one tell you it's cheating. Nearly every game produced these days is put together with routines culled from libraries or other games and even the best programmers have to use development tools — *SEUCK* just happens to be a very sophisticated one.

At the end of the day, though, it's the ideas and planning that count, so if you're contemplating writing your own game you should spend plenty of time on that side of things before even opening *SEUCK*. That should also give you time to save up the whacking 19.99 asking price.

Ken MacMahon

▼ Fancy a game of intergalactic chess?



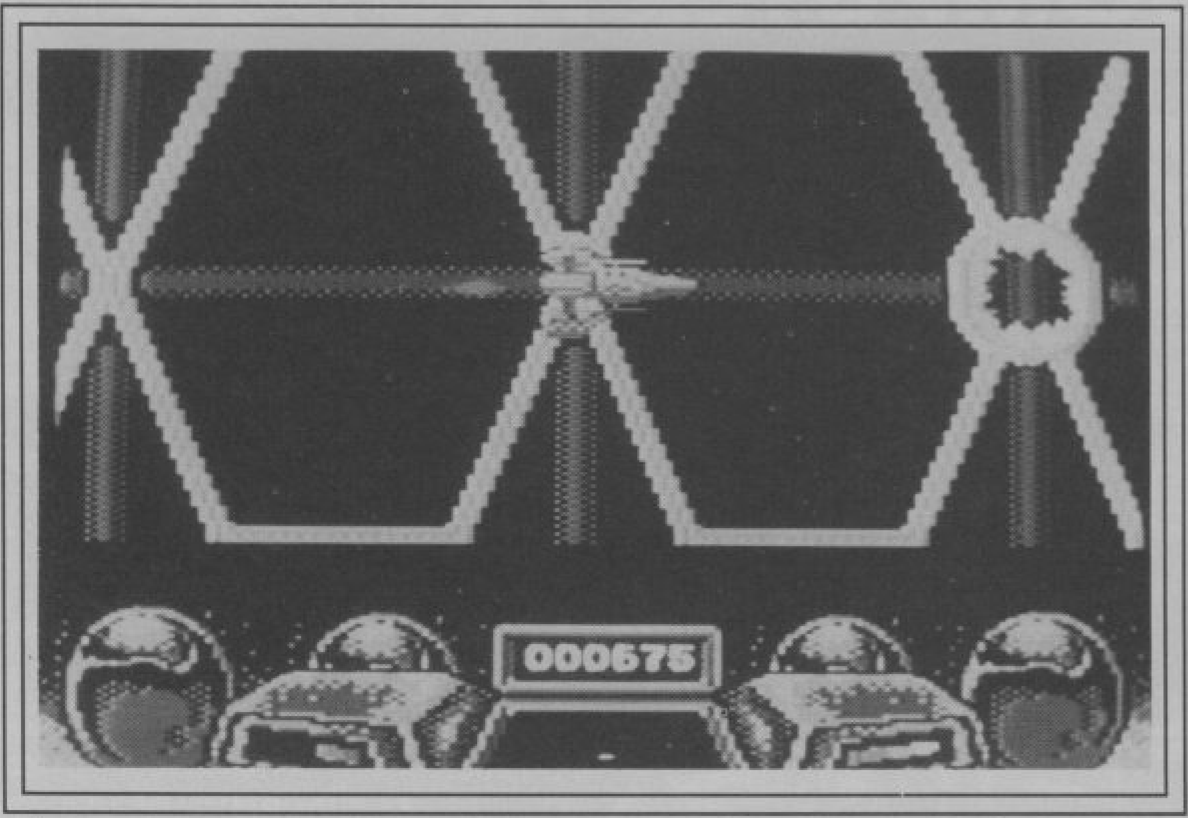
▼ Or perhaps you'd prefer a jaunt in the country.



Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall


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▲ ***Implosion — Cascade hit the spot.***

C64/128
Cascade Games
Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

Implosion

Implosion was programmed by sixteen-year-old Joe Booth. And in my opinion the boy Booth done well.

What Joe has done is to put some much needed life and originality into those nondescript arcade-style shoot' em ups we've been getting just recently. *Implosion* is like eating a Pot Noodle and finding it actually tastes of what's on the label. It scrolls faster, the graphics are bigger and bolder, your craft is large and manoeuvres smoothly, gameplay is pretty difficult, there's an impressive title tune — and there's not a single *Uridium*-like graphic in sight.

Poor old Joe must have had precious little time to think up a game scenario. So in desperation he came up with some guff about a White Dwarf Star hurtling on a collision course with Earth. You must destroy the WDS by stripping away its seven levels of defences and then slipping in the killer punch, like Mike Tyson, in the eighth round, er, level.

Your craft flies above what looks like a mass of inter-connected scaffolding. At various points on the scaffolding are energy cells which, according to the blurb, keep the structure together. You must find them, using the radar display at the bottom of the screen, and blast enough shots them until they disappear. You'll know when you see one, they pulse waves of electricity, like the aerial at the beginning of RKO films.

When you've located and destroyed all the cells, you get 10 seconds in which to locate the Portal and go on to the next level of defence. The Portal looks like the aperture of a camera rapidly opening and shutting.

The game works on two levels of depth. The scaffolding is held together by round blob-like things. Fire at a blob and it emits four crystals as it explodes. To collect them, you must dive below the grid by pressing the spacebar — pressing it again brings your ship back up. But you must be careful not to bump into any of the scaffolding.

Picking up crystals can either help or hinder you, depending on their colour. Pink, grey, green and brown are OK, they give you extra life, extra time, more energy and more points The blue ones take away energy — this is not a game for the colour-blind. Oh, there's a smart bomb too, which lets you zap with impunity and stops the timer for a short while.

Whether you're flying above or below the grid, the obligatory nasties can still get you. They're the usual swirling formations of coloured blobs and things. Whenever they collide with you, you lose more energy, displayed as a multi-coloured bar on the bottom left of the screen.

That's just about all you do for seven levels. The eighth level though, is different because you've now reached the planet surface. This is a maze of trenches which you fly above or inside in your quest to locate and destroy the power centres. Fly inside the trenches and you're in for a bumpy ride bouncing off walls and other obstacles — but the trench will protect you from attack.

So that's the game, but you can't really appreciate it without seeing it. Scrolling is in every direction and it's very fast and smooth. Your ship is perhaps the largest I've seen in an arcade game. A nice touch is that it grows a little smaller when you fly below the grid. And generally, all the graphics are bold and bright.

My only criticisms are that the seven levels look pretty similar, although the gaps between the grids get progressively smaller and the patterns change a bit. The gameplay is the same for every level and there's little to tax the brain except for picking up crystals.

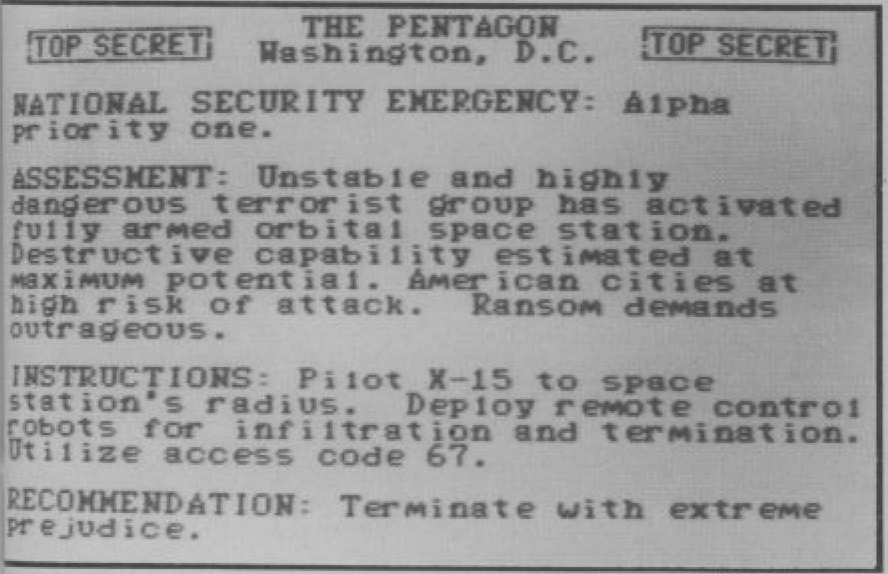
Enough whinging, I reckon *Implosion* is a pretty good game — which could have been better had the gameplay given you more to do. Cascade reckon it's so difficult that even the best zapper won't be able to finish it. Well, I won't tell you how many levels I completed.

Bohdan Buciak



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall



Screen shot of a top secret briefing. We feel you have a right to know.

C64/128
Activision
Price: £9.99/ cass £14.99/disk

X-15 ALPHA MISSION

Any resemblance between *X-15 Alpha Mission*, programmed by John Van Ryzin, and *X-29 Fighter Mission*, programmed by Rene Van Goethem and reviewed last February, is, of course, entirely coincidental. Makes you think, though; is the market about to be flooded by sub-standard flight sims all written by people called 'van'? I think we should be told.

And why X-15, rather than X-16 or X-200? Well, the legendary, rocket-propelled X-15 was, back in 1967, the first aircraft capable of reaching altitudes of 50 miles or more and speeds of over 4000 mph. Its test pilot was even awarded astronaut's wings.

Translate that into computer game terms, and you've got an excellent excuse for grafting a space shoot 'em up onto an air combat simulation.

But before you zip up your pressurised suit and don your helmet, you're presented with a secret access code and a memo from the Pentagon, ranting about global terrorists who've hijacked a fully-armed orbital space station. 'Terminate with extreme prejudice' it advises, just in case you're thinking ot terminating with only an ill-disguised dislike.

And then you're in the cockpit, confronted by the usual bewildering display of dials and gauges, some functional, some purely decorative, giving data about altitude, speed, fuel etc, etc. Take off involves matching your thrust to that of the computer display, using the fire button and pulling back on the joystick, to prevent the engines from stalling. During this sequence the screen judders impressively.

Once the X-15 is airborne, you're back in familiar territory: the ever-distant mountain range, the rolling green desert below, the wire-frame helicopters and spiky things which are meant to be missiles . . .

Air-to-air combat with the X-15 would offer no surprises at all if it wasn't for the peculiar joystick control that's required. The joystick only moves your gunsights (the crosshair, centre screen)allowing you to aim at the various enemy craft. but once the crosshair moves towards the edges of the combat window, then the joystick controls the X-15's course and altitude. So if you want to gain altitude in order to avoid an on-coming missile, you've got to first move the crosshair to left or right of the screen, and only then push the joystick forward to climb. Takes a bit of getting used to.

After a minute or two of this, your radio instructs you to climb into the cloud for some dogfights with the enemy jets, and if you survive this (pretty easy) phase, then you climb once more until at last you're in orbit, with killer satellites coming at you from out of the starry void.

It's essential that during these first three stages of the mission you keep on course as much as possible, guiding the X-15 towards the red box on the navigational grid. Fuel is so limited that even slight evasive action is going to make it unlikely that you'll ever reach the space station.

But if you do get there, you'll be prompted for that secret access code given at the beginning of the game and which you've long since forgotten. Once it's keyed in, there's a hazardous asteroid belt to navigate before the craft can touchdown on the station's hull.

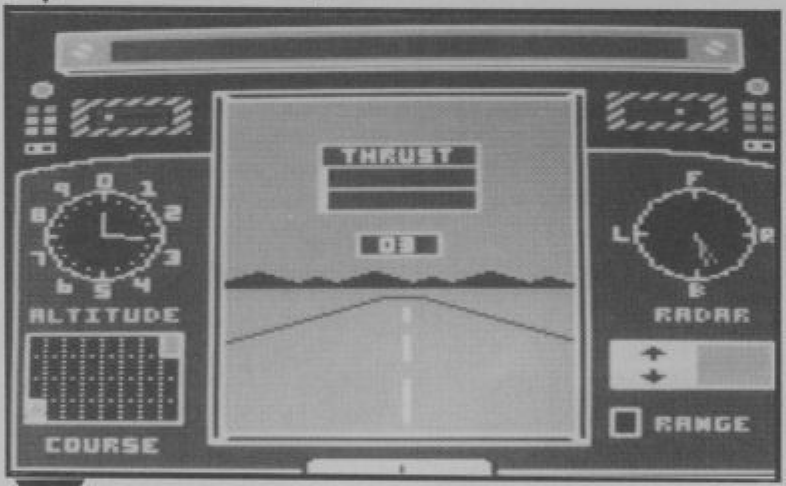
After all this aerial manoeuvring, the final stage comes as a bit of a surprise. The cockpit controls alter radically, and now you're guiding a fleet of remote-controlled robots around the base, seeking weapons systems to detonate until, at last, the space station self-destructs.

X-15 Alpha Mission has some nice touches, like the fuzzed screen and sudden nosedive when you get shot down, and the peculiar robot scenario at the end prevents it from being just another fighter plane shoot 'em up.

But you've probably already got quite a few games on your shelves which are similar to this, and if you haven't, then it's possible because you can't stand the things anyway. It's reasonably entertaining, not particularly challenging, and at 10 quid is definitely over the top, Wait a few months and you'll find it in the bargain bins.

Bill Scolding

Take off — takes practice.



Enemy choppers ahead — attack, attack, attack.



	Rating (out of 10)
Graphics	6
Sound	4
Toughness	6
Endurance	5
Value	5

5 Overall

Virgin games
Commodore 64/128
Price: £9.95 cass

ACTION FORCE

If you were to take a leisurely stroll past the vast(?) offices of Commodore User, you would almost certainly be startled by the enthusiastic and meaningful sounds of "Nnyyoww!!" or "Rat-a-tat-tat! Take that evil *Cobra* henchmen" Don't be alarmed it's probably only the Ed playing with the *Action Force* figures in his private jacuzzi — even though the rest of us have now grown out of these now (*Yes, they now play with more educational and mature toys, like He-man! — Ed.*).



Refuel at the construction site.

Anyway, the Ed flooded his jacuzzi and overheated his sauna when he saw a spanking new copy of the *Action Force* computer game on his desk. So excited did he get, he had to take a week off and I got to review the game. So what's all the excitement about?

The Action Force are a team of men who like to dress up in army greens. Their arch enemys are the evil *Cobra* force. These aren't real men actually, they are in fact six inch high plastic figures, like the *Masters of the Universe* but punier. In fact they look very much like runt *Action Men*. In the computer game you take the role of Wild Bill (who is apparently a particularly tough member of the Action Force, and no relation to him of Microprose fame).



Protect the jeep.

Nevertheless Wild Bill also happens to be a pilot. Your mission is to fly your helicopter around and blast enemy planes out of the sky — though there is a little (but only a little!) more to it than that. Anyway the purpose of annihilating the enemy with your Dragonfly (name of your chopper, cool-huh?) is to let one of your force's jeeps safely cross a *Cobra* guarded battlezone.

This task would be as easy as passing water into an ocean, but the problem is that you can't just fly above the jeep annihilating anything that dares try to harm it. No, there are other nasty little land obstacles which must be dealt with in order to save your jeep. Overcoming these means you'll have to leave the jeep defenceless for certain lengths of time. One of the more common and bitchin' problems is the screwy bridges. In 'Actionforceland' or wherever this is set, the bridge construction engineers need a good slap because they have a nasty tendency to build ten foot bridges over twenty foot gaps, which means you must skivvy over to one of the bridges, pick it up, and then fly back to the first bridge and cover the gap by putting down the borrowed bridge. Confused? Well, if that's not bad enough, once the jeep has gone over the bridge you just constructed you must then fly both bits of bridge to cover the next one!



Take evasive action.

There are also many other troubles that endanger the existence of your most valueable vehicle. I am practically kicking myself to know what's so special in that jeep that Wild Bill should want to risk his life for, but silly Virgin didn't tell me. All along the route your jeep travels are large poles emerging from the ground. Quite why they are there, God only knows, but all I know is that if the jeep touches certain poles it explodes. You must fly ahead of your jeep and blow these poles away, but which ones do you shoot?

There is also the minor problem of dying. Yes, the waterproof, shockproof, bratproof, even Edproof *Action Force* aren't totally invincible (*my dreams are shattered!! Ed.*) Still Wild Bill's state of the art chopper can take two hundred shots before going down, but when it goes it goes faster than Charlton Athletic. Two hundred shots may sound a lot but at the rate the enemy fire don't get into a state of misplaced self-confidence. There are also one or two oil-rig type structures which, if you touch them, in the immortal words of the Ed to go "Nnnyowww, pow-smash!!" (in his oh-so literate way.)

One of the buildings houses the dragonfly's fuel and ammo pads, this is found in the middle of each level and looks like a half built office block. Simply land your chopper on either of the two pads and your fuel or ammo will be replenished. Be careful though as the enemy can and will blast this away.

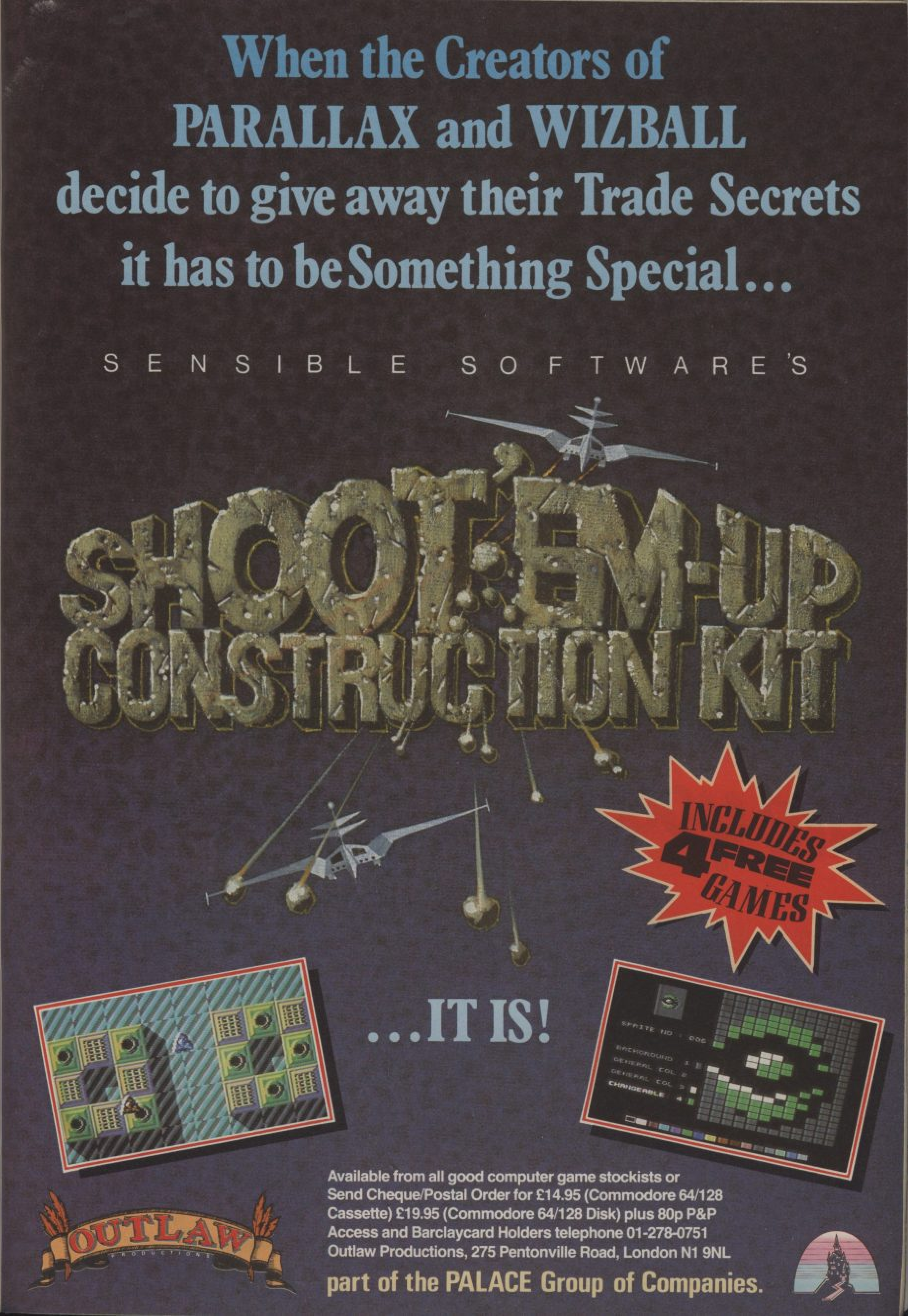
Action Force is an average game — nothing to keep me from going out. The graphics are of the same high standard that Virgin set with games like *Dan Dare* and *Rebel* — and similar in style to these games as well. However, I can't advise anyone other than a marine or the most ardent *Action Force* fanatic to part with 'hard earned' for this one. It just doesn't have anything new or compulsive to offer.

Ferdy Hamilton



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5 Overall


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Indy swings into action on your 64 in the next few weeks as USG launch their latest coin-op biggie.

The game follows the plot of the blockbusting sequel to Raiders quite closely. As Indy you have to find the Sankara Stone, rescue the imprisoned children from the village Mayapore — thus restoring tranquility to this remote region of mountain India.

Level One had not changed tremendously from the version I looked at last month. It is a fairly absorbing little platform and ladders number in which you have to rescue eight children trapped behind cages in the vast complex of caves.

To rescue the kids Indy simply flicks his whip at the bars of the cage and they rise up — the child is then registered at the foot of the screen in an information panel. This panel also tells you how many Indy's you have left.

Using the trusty whip is definitely the most fun part of the game. It is used mainly for wasting the 'Thugees' that patrol the cave. They are persistent Zombie-like characters clad in orange overalls. They look quite effective but are not that difficult to beat once you get the technique right. The knack is to keep on whipping them when they are on the ground to make them fall off the level you are currently on.

It's quite good fun scrapping with the Thugees and other nasties that are scattered through the cave complex — like the snakes and wizards who throw things at you. There are also skeletons set into the wall that you can swing your whip at to earn bonus points.

When you have rescued all the children, or even if you just get fed up with this level, you can then find the entrance to the mine shaft.

The mine shaft scene in the film won awards for the special effects and is possibly out of the most exciting piece of movie action ever made.

Unfortunately this part of the game won't win any. The graphics leave a lot to be desired and the gameplay fails to re-create the panic and excitement of the original coin-op.

The aim is to get to the end of the mine shaft without your car crashing or being caught by the pursuing Thugees. Again there are bonus points to be earned by flicking the whip.

Level Three places you inside the Temple of Doom itself. This is your chance to reach the Sankara stone. Again you don't need to be in the super league of game-playing proficiency to crack this third and final level. It is a matter of fighting more Thugees and dodging the fire balls thrown by a wizard who appears on-screen every so often.



The Thugees pour down the ladder but Indy is ready with his whip.

The entrance is guarded by Kali, the four-armed goddess of death. It doesn't end there, though, thankfully, you now have to rescue two further stones — taking you back through the previous levels. When you have three stones you can make good your escape over a rickety rope bridge.

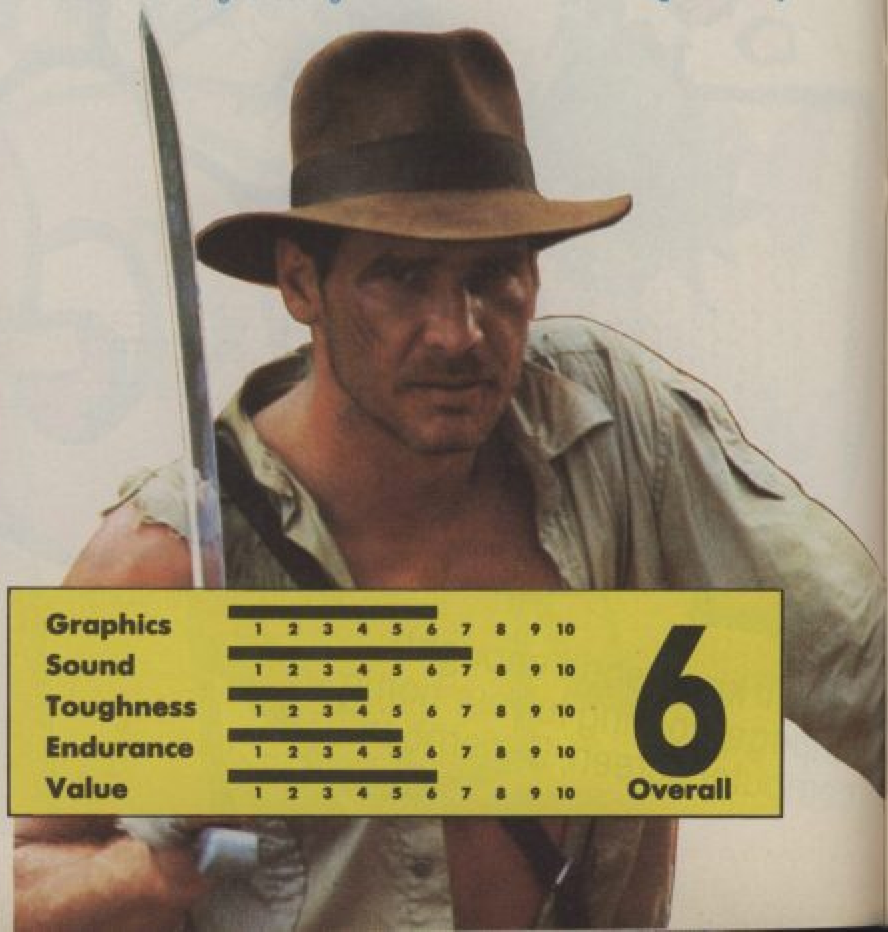
This is a close conversion of the original coin-op in the sense that none of the essential elements have been left out. However, there are question marks about the quality of that game in thefirst place.

It is basically too easy. Sure, there is the added challenge of seeing how quickly you can complete the game against a ratio of points scored — but I still feel something more arcade-adventure style would have been better. The version reviewed here is the disk version which yes — is multi-load and yes is slightly annoying. Only slightly though, it takes about 20 seconds between levels and to start a new game. USG tell me the multi-load system for the cassette has been improved and "doesn't take too long". Not for me personally — but if you loved the coin-op you shouldn't hesitate.

Eugene Lacey

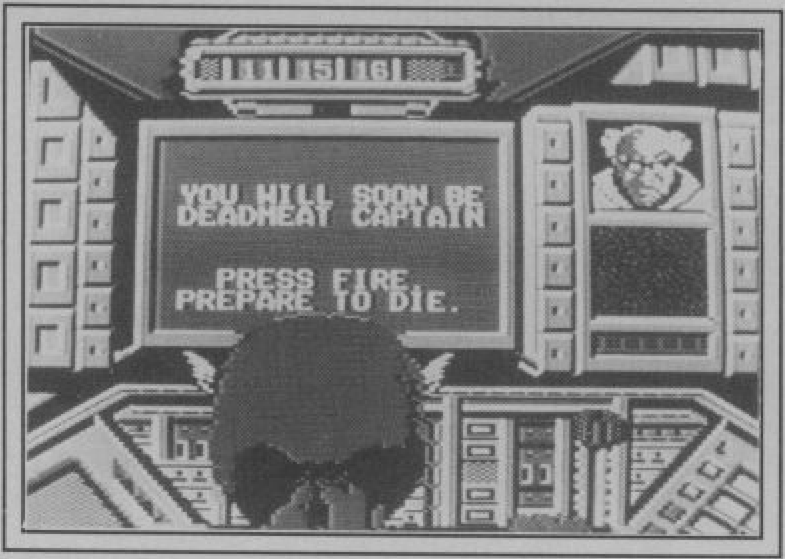
Indy struggles to get inside the temple.



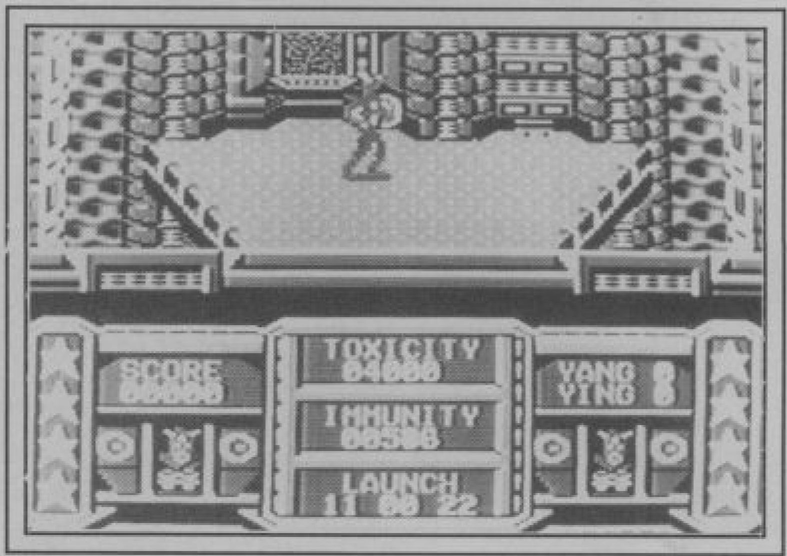


Graphics	6
Sound	7
Toughness	4
Endurance	5
Value	6

6 Overall



A cheery message for the Cap.



Check the toxicity level afore ye go.

CAPTAIN AMERICA



US Gold/Go! Commodore 64/128 Price: £9.99/cass £14.99/disk

Latest in a string of comic book heroes to hit the computer screen is Marvel's long-standing hero, Captain America.

As the Captain, or 'Cap', as he is affectionately known during the on-screen prompts, you are pitted against the insane would-be world-ruler, Dr Megalomman — with a name like that, he could hardly be an insurance clerk.

Megalomman has constructed a vast underground bunker which houses a missile primed with a deadly genetic virus; with this he intends to blackmail the US President into abdicating in his favour. Your mission is to penetrate all layers of the bunker, destroying Megalomman's robotic henchmen on the way, locate the missile and deactivate it.

Instructions for playing the game are sparse and take the form of a debriefing of the only survivor from a previous 'oust Megalomman' mission. This adds to the atmosphere but makes it very much a 'find out how to play as you go along' game.

To begin, you must learn how to operate the controls in the orbivator — a sort of lift which will despatch you into various locations within Dr Megalomman's bunker. All the locations, or 'quadrants', are contaminated by Megalomman's proprietary virus, so you must check that your immunity level is high enough before venturing further. For each quadrant there are specific instructions for dealing with the various robotic nasties therein.

The further you get into the game, the more you'll discover about how to increase your immunity, add to your weaponry, and the route down to the missile.

Captain America is a nicely put together package, with plenty of tension in the gameplay, although the features of the game are competent, rather than outstanding. The Captain America character is a rather fuzzy electric blue streak, and the megacyborgs, the robot guards, are simply spinning shapes. And although the Captain is a large character (rather than a little animated blob) the layout of the screens in the quadrant scenes makes for a very tight and confined playing area.

The continuous music, too, complements the gameplay, but it soon becomes a relief to turn off.

Obviously this is a game targeted at dedicated zappers, but it's nice to see that the plot is kept relevant to your actions throughout, and not just an excuse to clear screens, collect bonuses and break your joystick.

Christina Erskine



Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Overall



Navigate the jagged tunnel.

LAZER FORCE

64/128
Code Masters
Price:
£1.99/cass

Lazer Force is like all the upward scrolling shoot 'em ups you've ever seen — and thought you'd never have to play again. But bearing in mind that this is a cheapo, and I'm not the nasty type, I'll tell you it's not half bad. It even breaks a little new ground.

Anyway, you're the pilot of a cut-price delta-winged star fighter with awsome destruction power (not included on the standard model). Since the blurb writers haven't managed to come up with a story — it probably wasn't in the budget — you're pretty miffed at merely having to negotiate 32 levels with four sections in each level. This is disappointing. Why couldn't we have saved the planet from massive implosive forces?

The first section of each level is the conventional upward scrolling bit. Simply blast as much as you can as you make your way up what looks like a tunnel. The slightly naff terrain varies from level to level but is always slightly naff. Level One is best, with its tunnel of fire from which huge tongues of flames lick out intermittently from the side, trying to turn your craft into a flame-grilled burger.

Some of the higher levels also feature this sideways pop-out nasty threat, in the shape of grabbing robot arms and what looks like a rickety wooden bridge shooting out from either side. None of these are a patch on the flames, though.

During this section, if you manage to make contact with a WOP again, the budget didn't allow these to be explained, but they're POW backwards (*well spotted – Ed.*) Your fire-power increases from double to triple lazer fire. You'll know a WOP when you see one.

WOPs feature again in the second stage, similar to the first but with caterpillar-like lines wriggling their way down the screen towards you. Shoot the WOP out of four WOPs and you immediately teleport to a new level. Get zapped and you're despatched to the tedium of the third section.

Section three is one of those gentle docking stages where you must connect with the mother ship to refuel. Joystick control is severely limited here, and so is interest value. They could have done without inflicting this on us.

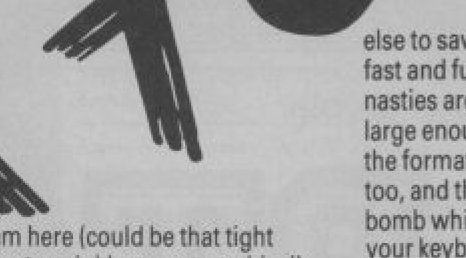
The final stage is a winding corridor along which you must make as much progress as you can before the time runs out. Push the joystick forward to increase speed, and increase your chances of crashing. I reckon the programmers ran out of steam here (could be that tight budget again) because graphically this readers type-in stuff.

Then it's on to the next level and more of the same, until you lose all your six lives. There's nothing much else to save about *Lazer Force*. It's as fast and furious as it should be. The nasties are pretty nasty and there's a large enough selection of them. All the formation flying stuff is there too, and there's the usual smart bomb which involves you smashing your keyboard to bits in a frenzied attempt to get at the spacebar.

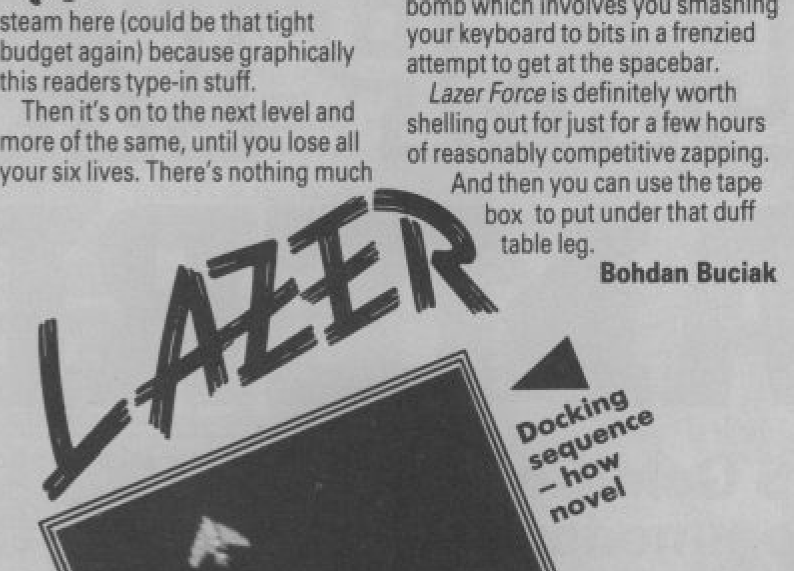
Lazer Force is definitely worth shelling out for just for a few hours of reasonably competitive zapping. And then you can use the tape box to put under that duff table leg.

Bohdan Buciak

LAZER FORCE



Docking sequence – how novel



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6 Overall



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▲ **Boo-Boo where are you?**



▲ **Smarter than the average? That depends on you.**



YOGI BEAR

64/128
Piranha
Price:
£9.95/cass
£14.95/disc

I can't bear it. Yogi's pal Boo-Boo has been bearnapped by a mean hunter (is there any other kind?) and only Yogi can save him from a fate worse than chicken McNuggets. Now we all know Yogi bear isn't the world's greatest cartoon character. By my reckoning he comes a long way behind Bugs Bunny, Fred Flinstone and Roadrunner to name but a few. But this Piranha game version of the smarter than your average bear is actually better than the real thing.

Yogi must rescue the bearnapped Boo-Boo from the cage in which he has been imprisoned. The game begins with the hunter whisking helpless Boo-Boo across the screen and away into the depths of Jellystone Park, where he paces up and down awaiting his fate — to be sold to a circus. In case you needed reminding the Boo-Boo-ometer at the bottom of the screen shows him in the cage together with the number of screens remaining before you reach him.

With no time to waste, Yogi appears screen left and this is where you take over. Throughout the game you travel from left to right as the terrain scrolls by. To begin with it's easy going. The only things Yogi has to avoid are holes in the ground and the odd frog.

Throughout the game there are three kinds of hazard. Those like the holes and rivers — which mean loss of one of your five lives, and less harmful obstacles like the odd geyser and the frogs which cause Yogi to tumble head over heels (in true cartoon style his hat stays airborne and lands back on his head) and lose some of his energy. Lastly, there are deadly human hazards. Among these are Ranger Smith who chases Yogi for the hell of it, irate campers annoyed at having lunch and yet more hunters.

If you can't shake them off Yogi can resort to disguising himself as a bush (much smarter than your

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8
Overall

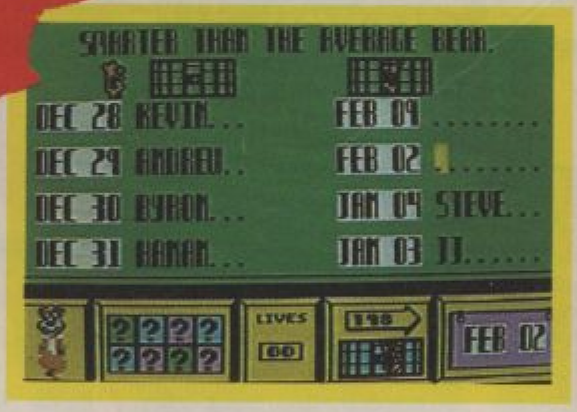


average bear), but again, this uses up energy. Yogi's remaining energy is measured by a meter in the bottom left of the screen. A Yogi icon slowly sinks down, eventually with a huge exclamation mark above it as he gets weaker and weaker.

Thankfully, bear energy can be replenished by grabbing the picnic hampers left lying around by the careless campers and stealing fish from the end of the anglers' lines. You'll need to do a lot of food grabbing because there are a lot of energy sapping nasties around including a moose, bees and what looks like a giant seagull. Far more lethal though are the snakes — one touch from them and you're dead a bear.

The object of the game is twofold. A calender in the bottom right of the screen shows the days ticking by from the January date when Boo-Boo was bearnapped. For beginners and the inept it's enough just to survive as long as you can and there is a high score table on which you can register your achievement. The more ambitious can try to rescue Boo-Boo in as short a time as possible.





To get to Boo-Boo quickly you will need to take advantage of the caves. These operate in a snakes and ladders kind of fashion. If you enter a cave you might come out many screens in advance of your original position. On the other hand you might end up a long way back. You just have to take your chances, but it's worth making a note of the Boo-Boo-ometer reading when you find a really good cave short-cut.

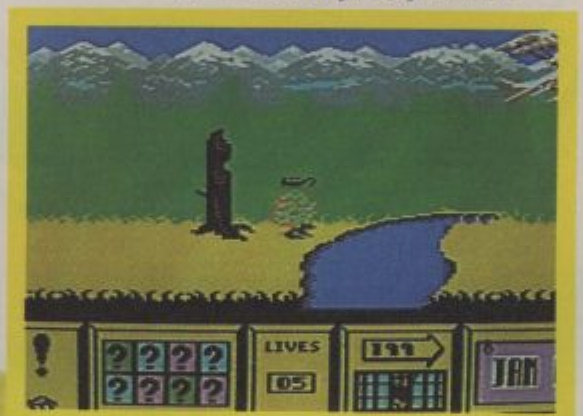
The game isn't over when you reach the cave. Yogi must hop on some strange shaped stepping stones in the right sequence before he can get the key from the camper's cabin. If he does it in the wrong order the alarm goes off and it's goodbye to another life. Again there's help at hand. Boo-Boo has left a trail of toffee apples with clues stuck to them. But they're not that easy to get at, and if you use the caves you'll miss out on some, which means it's guessing time.

The graphics and animation are brilliant throughout and very like the cartoon. The scrolling super-smooth — the mountains in the distance scroll more slowly than the foreground scenery giving the true 3D effect and the mustic is pretty good as well. In all, Yogi Bear is an excellent cartoon coversion.

Bohden Buciak



▼ **Turning yourself into a bush is pretty smart.**





▼ **Mind the hole Yogi.**





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- Graphics by Pete James
- Sound FX by Tony Crowther.

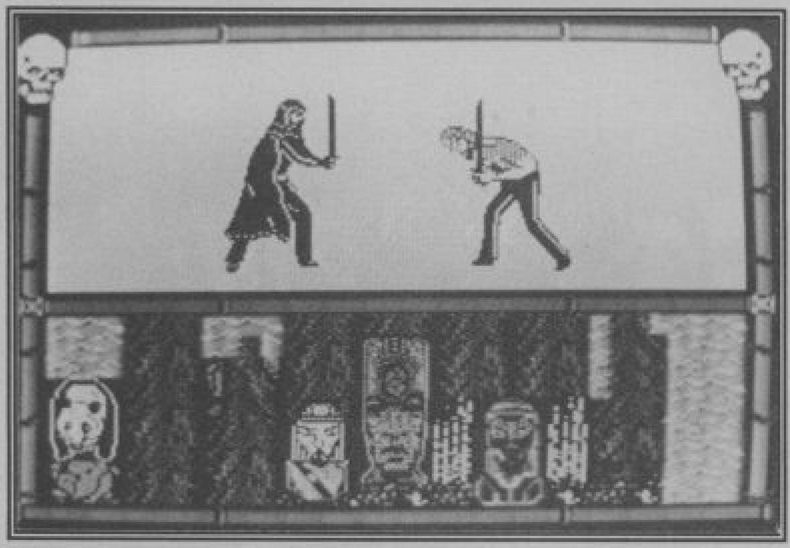
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64/128
Origin Systems Inc.

Combat makes Ninja Master look good.





Price: disk £19.99

MOEBIUS

Before I really get into this review, let me explain about Origin Systems. For the past few years they have been releasing massive (usually double-disk) strategy/adventure games like the *Ultima* series. These have, overall, been excellent fantasy adventures with great depth and feeling — enough to keep fans of the genre playing for many weeks or even months. A few weeks ago, however, Origin showed signs that they were starting to slip — they released *Autoduel*, to a very mixed reception. Well, the bad news is that *Moebius* is no improvement, and is in fact possibly worse.

The story behind the game is that Moebius the Windwalker, an ancient Oriental deity, has picked you to recover his Orb of Celestial Harmony, which has been nicked by one of his old disciples, Kaimen. You must brave the four elements (Earth, Water, Air and Fire, if you didn't already know), find the wayward Mr Kaimen, and persuade him to return the Orb — using tact, diplomacy and a five foot long sword.

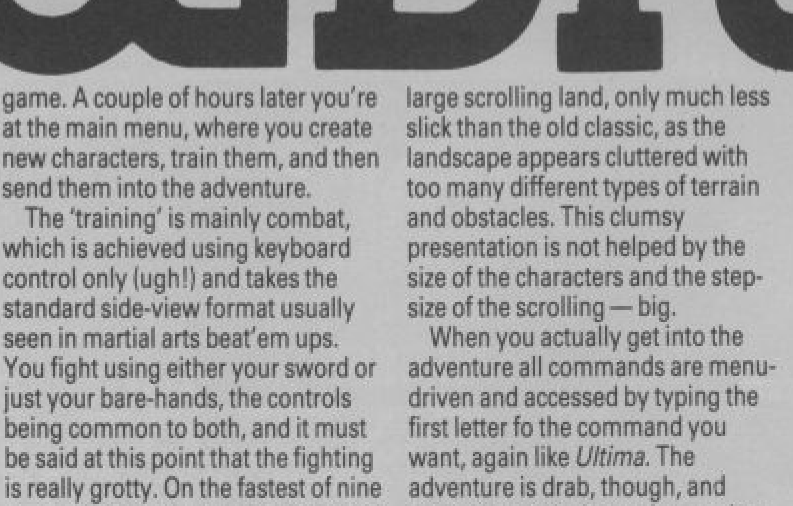
You can tell you're going to be in for a tough time when the infamous Origin disc turbo (that's the one that slows down the 1541 by up to 7.5 times) gets to work loading the game. A couple of hours later you're at the main menu, where you create new characters, train them, and then send them into the adventure.

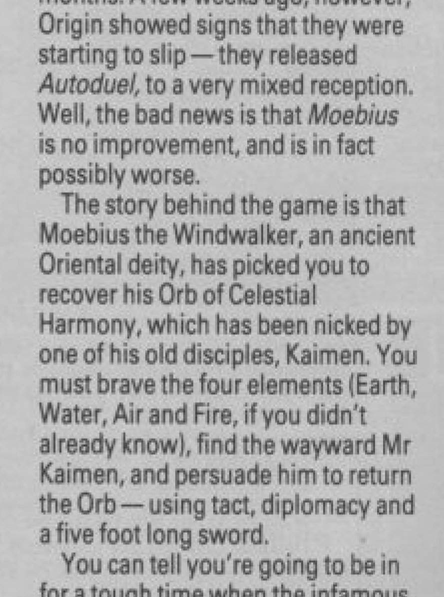
The 'training' is mainly combat, which is achieved using keyboard control only (ugh!) and takes the standard side-view format usually seen in martial arts beat'em ups. You fight using either your sword or just your bare-hands, the controls being common to both, and it must be said at this point that the fighting is really grotty. On the fastest of nine speeds it feels slower than *Fist I*, and with much worse graphics. Once you have won a fight with both your sword and bare hands, and developed your mind by 'divination' (keep a small moving sprite inside a box using the direction keys), you can enter the adventure. This resembles the *Ultima* style, i.e. your central character moving around a large scrolling land, only much less slick than the old classic, as the landscape appears cluttered with too many different types of terrain and obstacles. This clumsy presentation is not helped by the size of the characters and the step-size of the scrolling — big.

When you actually get into the adventure all commands are menu-driven and accessed by typing the first letter fo the command you want, again like *Ultima*. The adventure is drab, though, and rather than exloring an interesting little world, it feels as if you'll fir.d the fact that initially you have three lives very useful, as you will most probably die fairly quickly — the combat becomes much harder when you're only given a third of your opponent's strength. However, the spectre of the disc access will return to haunt you: each time Moebius has something to say, e.g. "live again, my disciple", the game loads his picture off disc! aarrgghh!! Unless you want to finish this game on a pension, you'd better have a disc turbo.

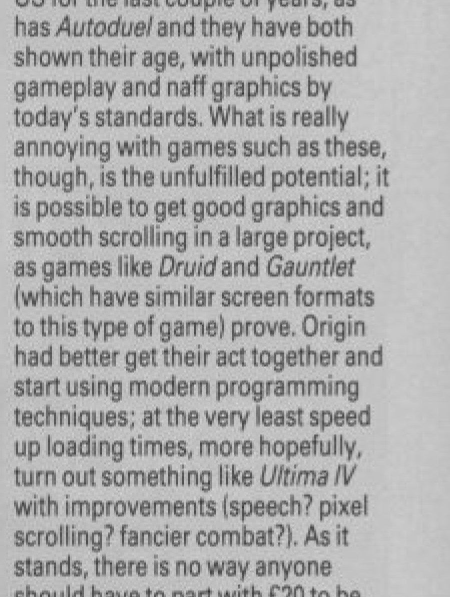
And so to the real crux of Origin's problems at the moment — they keep releasing old games. This particular number was written in 1985, presumably it's been out in the US for the last couple of years, as has *Autoduel* and they have both shown their age, with unpolished gameplay and naff graphics by today's standards. What is really annoying with games such as these, though, is the unfulfilled potential; it is possible to get good graphics and smooth scrolling in a large project, as games like *Druid* and *Gauntlet* (which have similar screen formats to this type of game) prove. Origin had better get their act together and start using modern programming techniques; at the very least speed up loading times, more hopefully, turn out something like *Ultima IV* with improvements (speech? pixel scrolling? fancier combat?). As it stands, there is no way anyone should have to part with £20 to be bored witless by this sort of junk.

Dan Gilbert





	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	3
Sound	2
Toughness	8
Endurance	3
Value	2
Overall	**3**



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The speed and efficiency is **incredible**, who would believe that the humble old 1541 could load 202 **blocks in less than 5 secs**. It is compatible with the majority of commercial software and can be switched out when necessary. One of the real pleasures of using this system is to use it with the likes of Easyscript & Superbase to speed up both the **normal loading and the sequential files**. It is important to point out that this is achieved using **standard** CBM disk format and not a special system, therefore you can still use your existing disks.

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▲ **First there was Terra Cresta — then everyone launched a vertical shoot 'em up.**

BLAZER

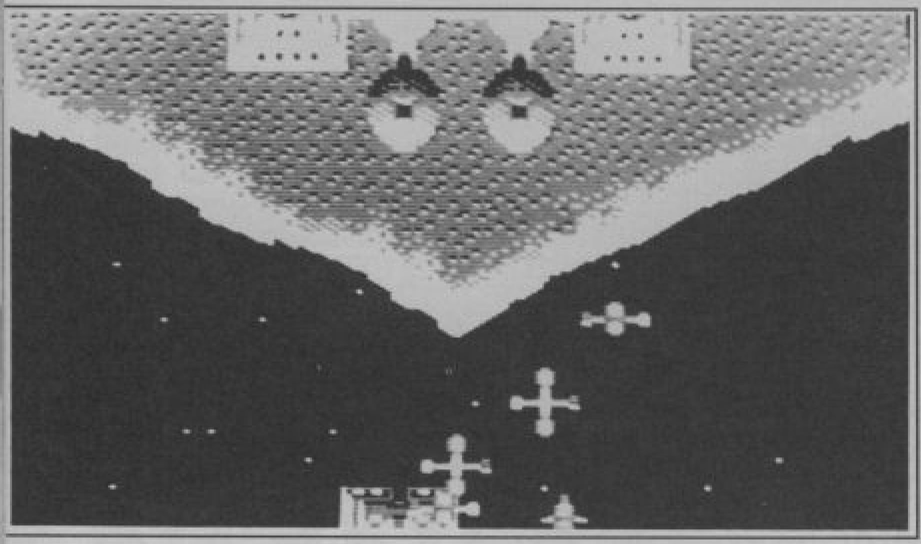
64/128 NEXUS Price £7.95 /cass

Nexus continue to defy all natural laws by releasing another game of quiet stunning mediocrity. Students of the soporific arts will doubtless remember their previous releases; a motley crew of shoot-em-ups and strategy games, with a sports simulation thrown in for good measure . . . Oh yes, and enough pencil cases to last the average kid a lifetime. Nonetheless, I never hold survival against anyone. Alas, *'Blazer'* is the slimmest and least attractive release I've seen in months. The plot looks promising — fly to an alien planet and steal a secret weapon from under the nose of the enemy — but believe me, Clint Eastwood wouldn't be seen dead on a film-set like this. As soon as you get past the loading screen you'll like this. As soon as you get past the loading screen you'll see why. It looks and sounds like something a good programmer's kid brother would write; big blotchy sprites, undetailed scrolling backgrounds, Amstrad sound effects, you know the stuff . . .

To be more specific, this is *'Light Force'* without any of the polish, speed of gameplay and even some (your ship is supposed to pick up extra weapons as you go) fail to deliver very much.

Anyone unfamiliar with FTL's minor masterpiece, or that ancient arcade game *Starforce* need only picture an alien landscape which scrolls upwards, and waves of aliens that fly in formation from the top or sides of the screen. Your own ship has to bob and weave its way to the end of the landscape, shooting some features on the ground for extra points but mainly other ships for the hell of it. Now this would be pointless enough, if several labels had not already done it well for £1.99. *Warhawk* (go and buy it of the promised special features folks!) is not only everyting *Blazer* is, it's also much more playable. The big question is . . . what next, for Nexus? Well, they could try taking half the sprites out of 'Barbarian' and calling it *Donkey-Jacket* or perhaps halving the speed of *Uridium* and calling it *Pullover*. Best of all would be to write something half way decent and then halve the price. 'Familiarity breeds contempt' they say, something which is true of both *Blazer* and sadly, Nexus themselves.

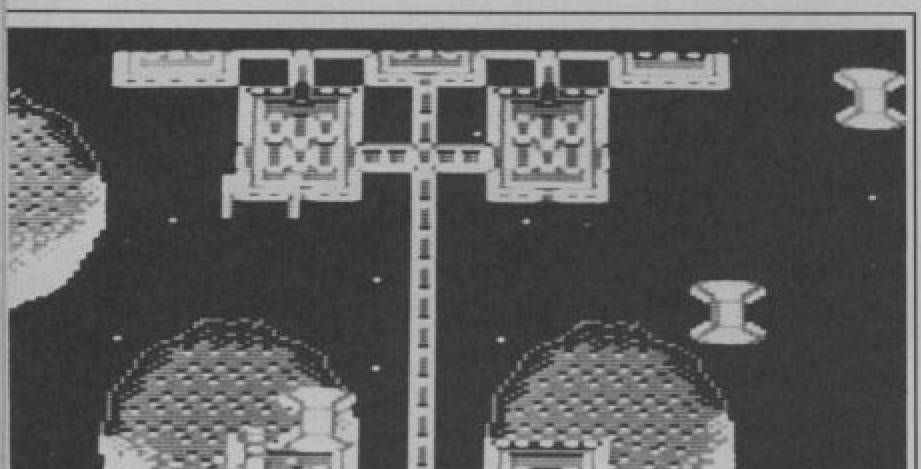
Tina Milan.



▲ **Jax-like enemy ships rush past.**



▲ **Blasting ground ships is vital.**



▲ **Scroll past vast space fortresses inflicting maximum damage.**

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5 Overall



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CHUCK YE

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CAPT. JOHN HUTCHINSON REVIEW

64/128
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EA's first flight simulator comes with the endorsement no less, of General Chuck Yeager, USAF (retrd), the first man to break the sound barrier way back in 1947 in a Bell X-1. That's some name to live up to, but EA's simulation promises a great variety of aircraft types to fly.

You can choose from seat of the pants Spads of the Mach 2+ General Dynamics F-16, the Fighting Falcon, and three mythical airplanes especially programmed to test the skills of any pilot with their highly-unpredictable handling. However, they're particularly difficult to locate in the program.

There are five different game plans available: *Introductory Flight, Test Flight, Air Racing, Formation Flying and Flight Instruction.* There is a comprehensive instruction manual which includes technical specifications for all the different types of aircraft as well as a section devoted to the principles of flight and instructions on how to perform the different manoeuvres. As always it pays to read the manual before embarking on a mission. Once you've done that you'll be in good shape to get started and the most sensible thing to do is to sit back and get a feel for the instrumentation and graphics by watching the *Introductory Flight*. This takes you through a hair-raising sequence dodging around a slalom course at near ground level in one of the mythical great airplanes, an XPG-12 Samurai. Having frightened the life out of yourself watching this, select one of the other options from the menu.

If you are not a Concorde pilot like me, or aren't familiar with flight sims, the Flight Instruction sequence would be well worth your time. Basic instruction takes you through the fundamentals

Cockpit view from the P-512D Mustang.



Cap'n Yeager is quick to point out any mistakes.



EAGER'S

CAPT. JOHN HUTCHINSON REVIEW

such as straight and level flight, turns, climbs, descents, take-offs and landings. Watch the demonstrations and then try the different manoeuvres yourself. Advanced instruction includes steep turns and stall recoveries and by this time you should be ready to try your hand at some aerobatics as well. There's instruction on how to perform loops, slow rolls or Cuban Eights. Follow the instructions on how to perform these and you will get a real feel for them as well as a clear insight into how they are performed. I thoroughly enjoyed this section.

Of the remaining game options available I thought the *Test Flight* was the most challenging. Here you take on a wide range of aircraft and try to get as much out of them as possible. I took an F-16 Fighting Falcon up to 82,000 feet and Mach 2 — I have an idea the height I achieved was somewhat in excess of the real thing!

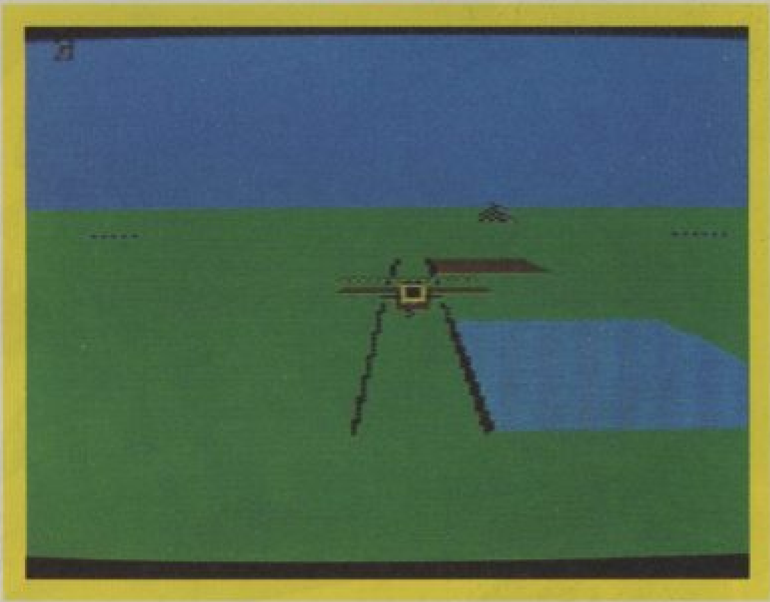
You can pit your skill against the various aeroplanes and try your hand at a selection of flight test manoeuvres. The two menu options I found least satisfying and realistic were *Airplane Racing* and *Formation Flying*. The control responses were not tight enough to allow you to follow the required flight paths and there was too much lag. Also, I found that the graphics were not really good enough to allow accurate visual formation flying. Nor were the instruments (the altimeter in particular) of a large enough scale to fly low level safely. I found myself eating dirt on several occasions. Should you fail this badly a picture of Chuck will appear to admonish you on your performance. A humbling experience.

Nevertheless my overall impression is that *Chuck Yeager* is a genuine instructional flight simulation that provides a sound basic insight into the techniques of flying. In general the instruments were clear and not too cluttered and the programming sticks to the basics of flying rather than taxing you with extras like navigation or fuel. For example, you can land more or less anywhere and carry on flying for as long as you like! I sometimes wish the real thing was like that.

Obviously that isn't too realistic, but it does allow you to learn about aircraft handling without having to concentrate on such details.

Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer is a worthy addition to the ones I've flown and genuinely instructional. Take it for a spin.

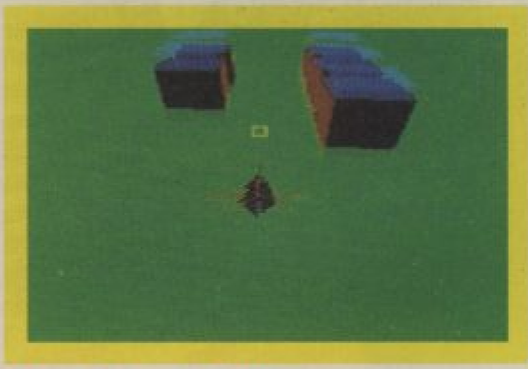
Capt John Hutchinson



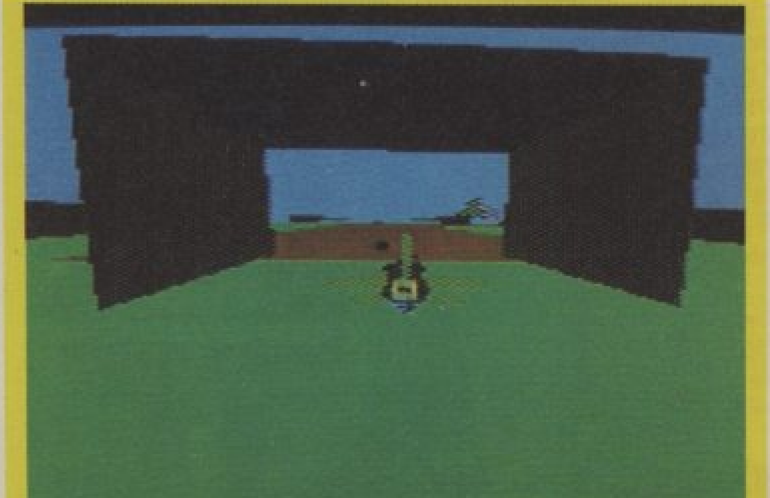
The fighter gets ground installations in its sights.



Sopwith Camel nose dives.



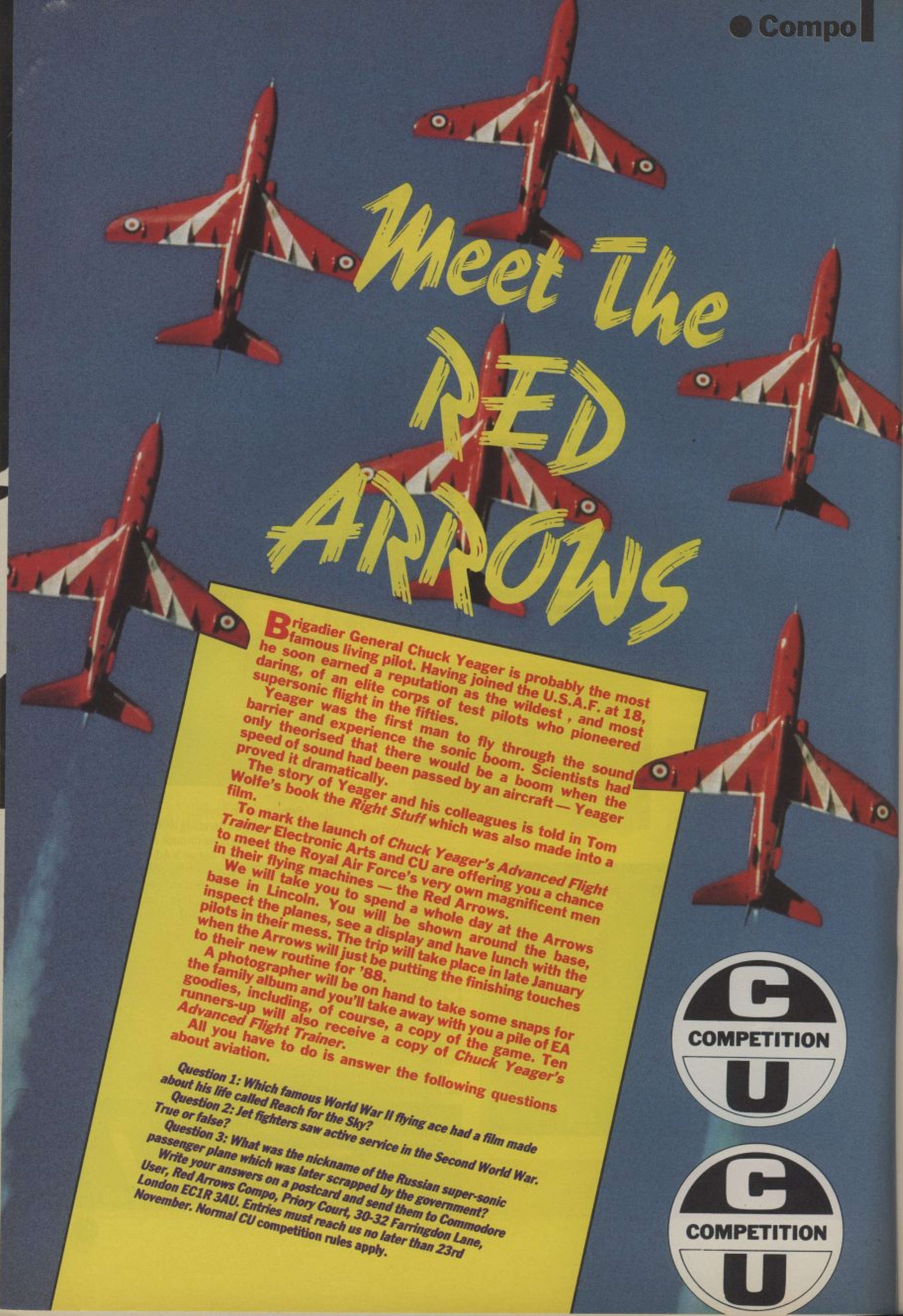
Prepare to land.



Low level stunts in the Lockheed SR-71.

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Overall



Meet The RED ARROWS

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A photographer will be on hand to take some snaps for the family album and you'll take away with you a pile of EA goodies, including, of course, a copy of the game. Ten runners-up will also receive a copy of *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer.*

All you have to do is answer the following questions about aviation.

Question 1: Which famous World War II flying ace had a film made about his life called Reach for the Sky?

Question 2: Jet fighters saw active service in the Second World War. True or false?

Question 3: What was the nickname of the Russian super-sonic passenger plane which was later scrapped by the government?

Write your answers on a postcard and send them to Commodore User, Red Arrows Compo, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Entries must reach us no later than 23rd November. Normal CU competition rules apply.

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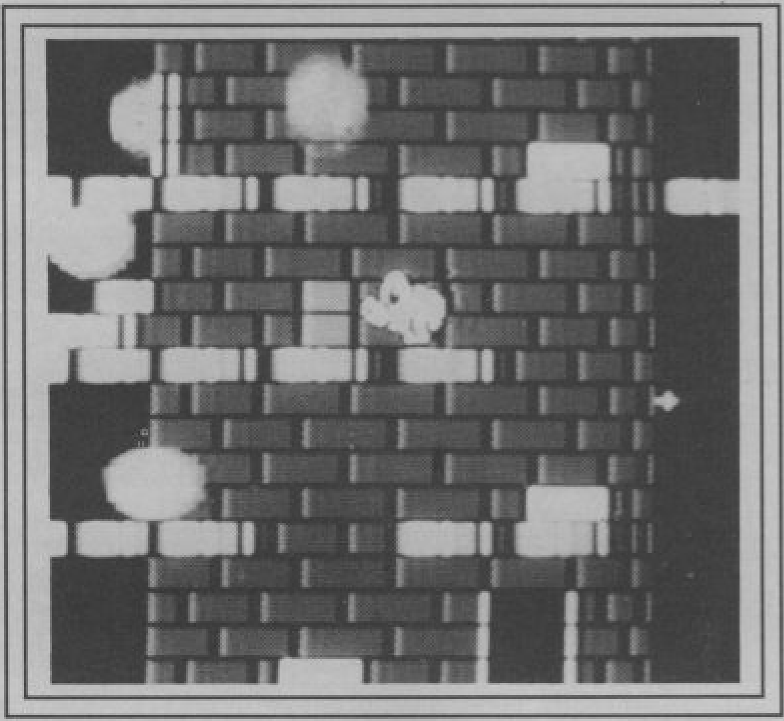
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Nebulus

Hewson would need someone like Colonel Oliver North to convince me this wasn't a platform game — and I'd still opt for a Senate enquiry. It's not just the levels, the lifts and the caving-in floors, what really give it away are the — er — platforms.

My fact sheet tells me the programmer's got a degree in cybernetics and that in Nebulus he's using something called 'rotational' 3D scrolling and multi-layer parallax scrolling. So plaftorm game it may be, but the graphics sould like being pretty neat.

For those of you who need a storyline to get really involved, here's a quick rundown. Someone has been building towers in the sea without planning permission. You're the demolition man from Destructo Inc. sent to pull them all down, one at at time, until you've demolished all eight. Curiously, the tower crumbles automatically as soon as you get to the top. McAlpines should know about this.

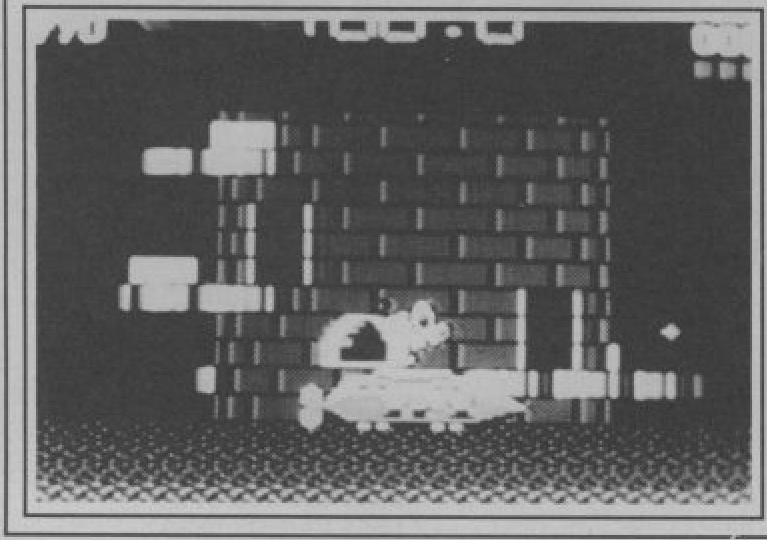
In true Hewson style, there's a 100 second time limit for each tower, and a brief fish-catching interlude between levels for grabbing extra points. So now you know, cybernetics is the art of devising incredibly naff game stories.

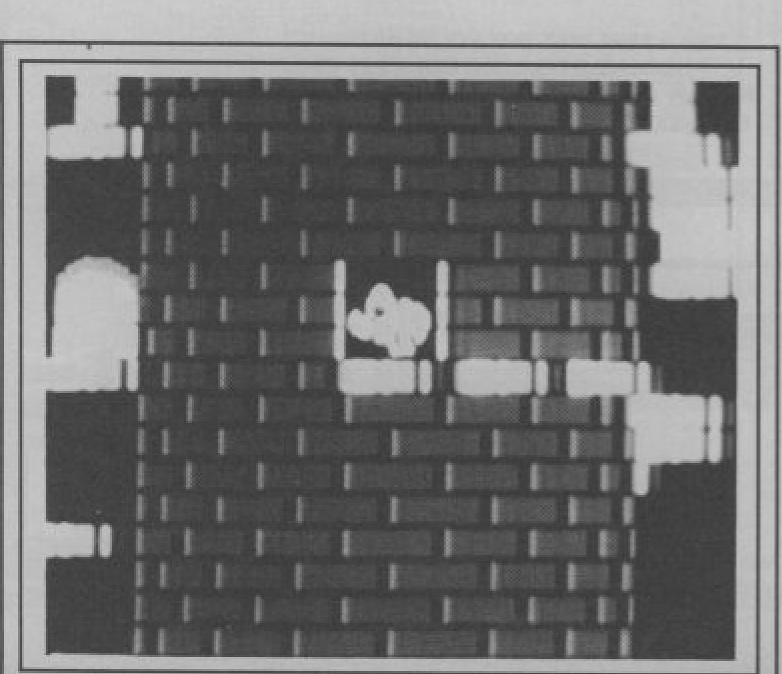
Each level starts with this Funny Little Creature being deposited from a submaring onto the base of the tower. The FLC looks like a cross between a squirrel and a frog. It's got two legs,a huge eyes, a tail and it crouches forward as it walks. It's brilliantly animated but just that bit too gribbly 'cute' for my liking.

Anyway, the outside of the tower is surrounded by plaftorms, steps, lifts and windows. You move up by negotiating the plaftorms and steps, going up sections in the lift and by entering windows which deposit you out of another window a little further up. You only see part of the tower at a time, which scrolls upwards as you go.

Now for the rotational scrolling stuff. Since the tower is round, and you're going round it as you make your way up, the perspective rotates so that you see different sides of the tower as you go. This is all very impressive, if not a little weird.

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Now for the nasties, apart from dodgy platforms and slippery steps that make you fall down a bit (sometimes as far as the bottom), there are bouncing balls to zap and various flying things that you can't zap. Bump into any ot these and you tumble down a few sections. Only the coloured balls are zappable, the silver ones are just temporarily stunned.

On top of that, each level has its own peculiar nasty. The first, Tower of Eyes, has (you guessed it) eyes that float up and down. They'll knock you off too. Then there's the Realm of the Robots etc etc.

I suppose you're waiting to hear about multi-layer parallax scrolling. You get this in the interval scene which finds you in the submarine zapping fish for bonus points. This amounts to nothing more than the background scrolling more slowly than the toreground, bit disappointing really.

What's good about Nebulus? The scrolling graphics are pretty special, as are the sound effects and the animation of the FLC. A nice touch is the FLC's rear end getting smaller as it enters a window. The sound of padding feet is also well done, and it changes slightly when the FLC is inside the tower.

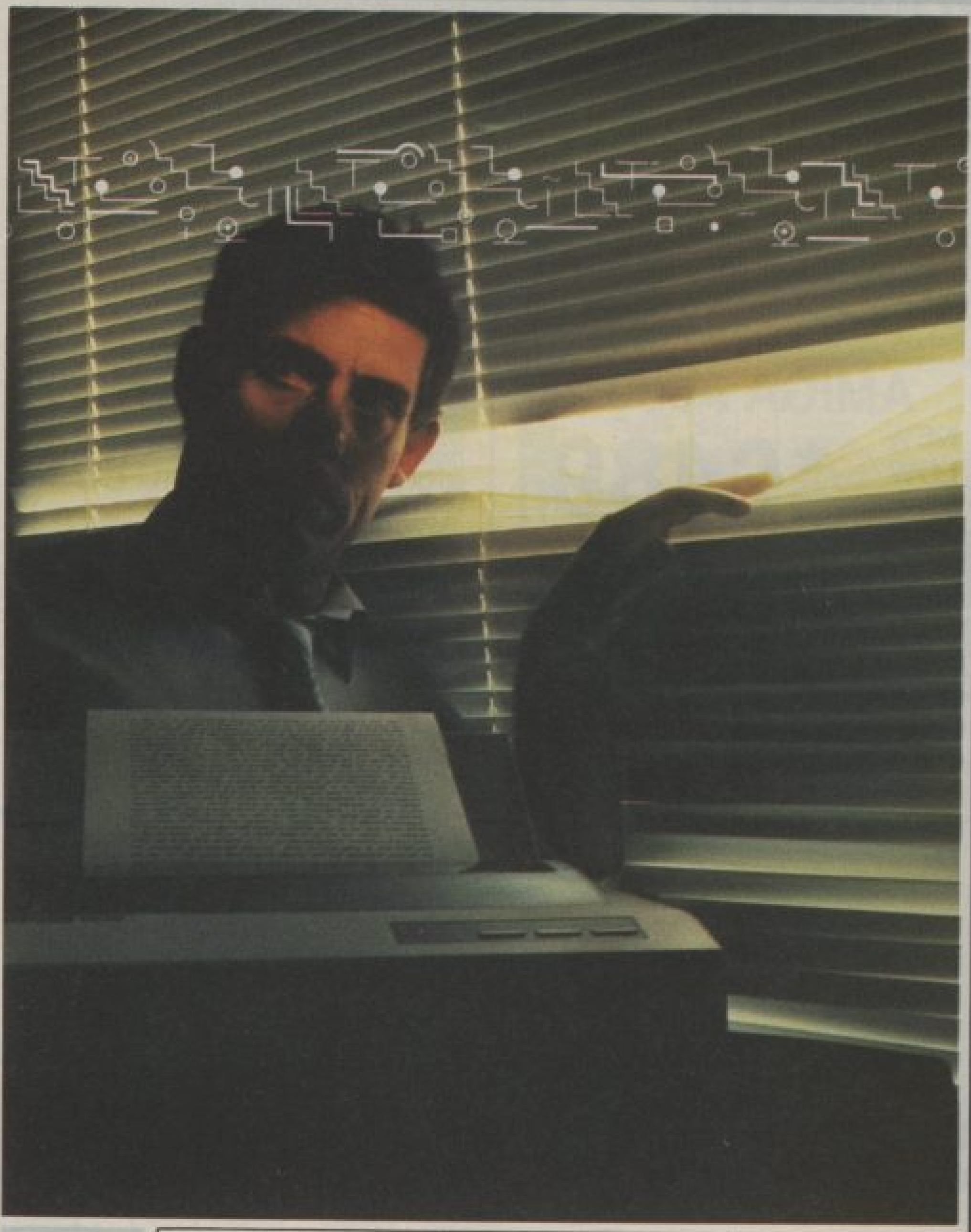
What's bad about it? The problem is that there's only one way to the top, and the obstacles and nasties are always the same — there's nothing random. So it's just a matter of learning the correct route and what nasties to avoid and blast at each stage. The tower is supposed to crumble when you get to the top. I was expecting a Walls of Jericho job. What actually happens makes you wonder whether climbing up was worth the effort — I'm not telling so as not to spoil it for you.

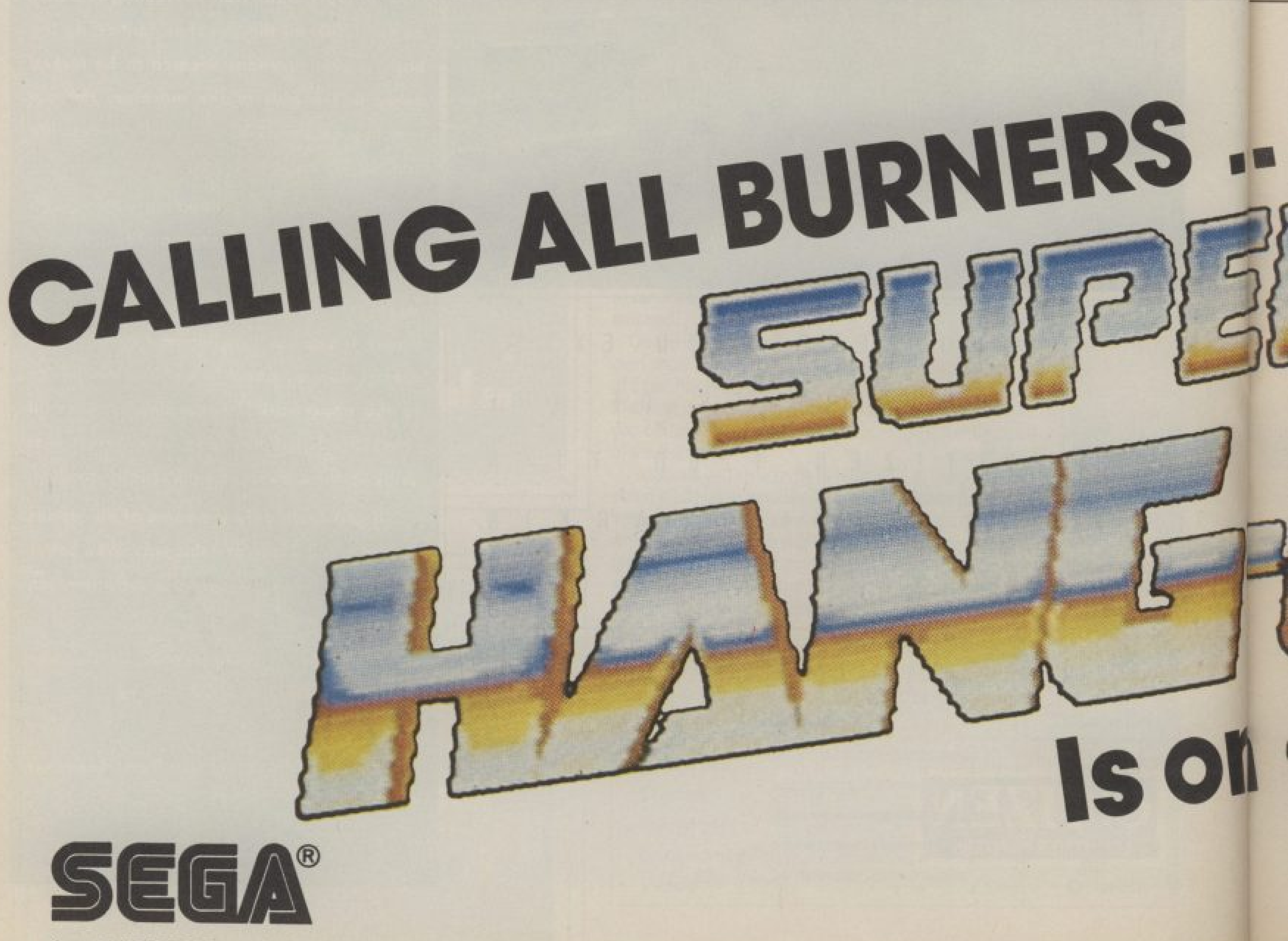
I liked *Nebulus* because it's got classy graphics and animation, but the gameplay just isn't sufficiently challenging to sustain interest. Being simply very difficult is not good enough. Once you know what happens when you get to the top, you might as well give up because the succeeding levels really aren't that much different — a flawed masterpiece really.

Bohdan Buciak

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall





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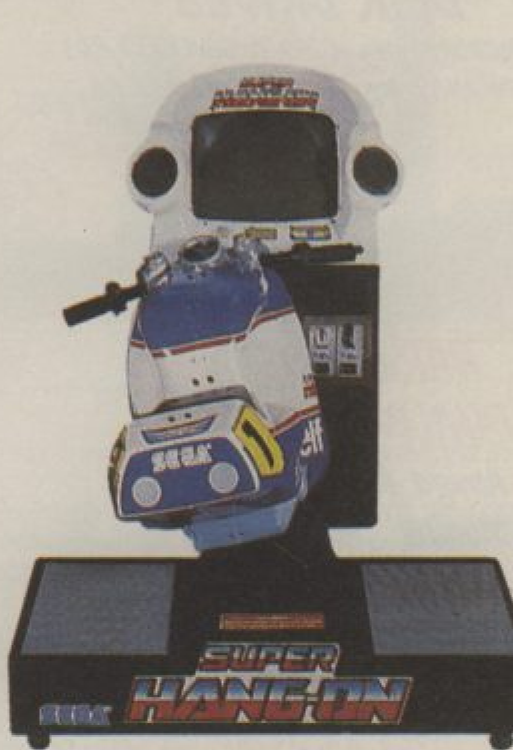
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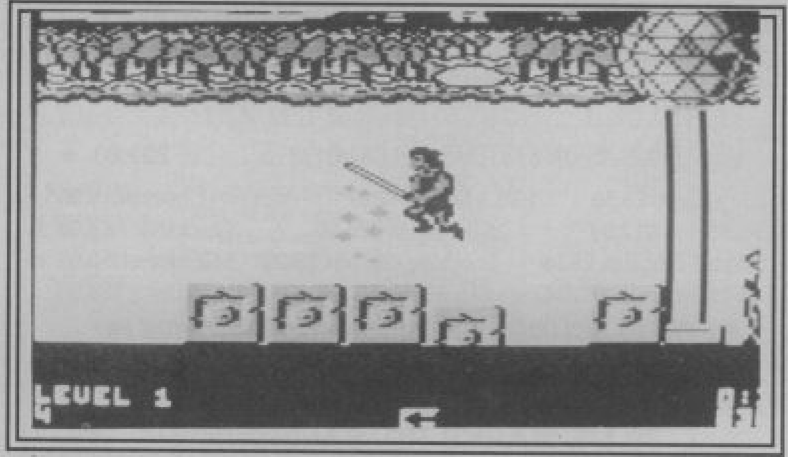
THUNDERCATS

Just one of the particularly meaningless phrases offered by the feline He-men (and women) is "Sword of Omens give me sight beyond sight." Who are these page 7 fellas of the cat world then? They are the Thundercats. For those of you who've never been educated in the ways of these Whiskas-chomping crime busters, or who've never watched the cartoon or stuck the stickers, the Thundercats are four er . . . well, I suppose they are what would occur if Superman mated with a lion! The Thundercats are blessed by the Eye of Thundera, a jewel set in to the all-doing and seeing Sword of Omens (the major source of the Thundercats power). It is with the help of this sword that Lion-O, Tygra, Panthro and the luscious Cheetara combat against the evil forces of MUMM-RA!

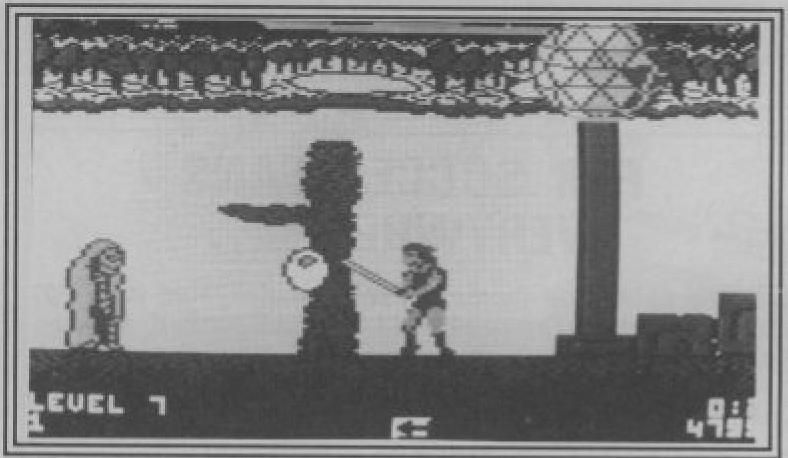
While foiling a raid by the Molemen the Thundercats did not notice a group of Mumm-ra's agents sneaking in to the cats lair (their base) and stealing the precious Eye of Thundera. Lion-O who had the jewel entrusted to him, swears to get the jewel back or die trying.

The game is a horizontally scrolling 'kill 'em all' game, closest to *Green Beret* in style but not quite a rip-off. You control Lion-O and must jump, shoot and stab your way through levels. The enemy henchmen mainly come from the side you are facing but if you slow down they're quickly up your backside.

There are power packs to be found on the levels when you stab these



▲ **One down — but watch your back.**



▲ **Bet you wish you had a gun.**

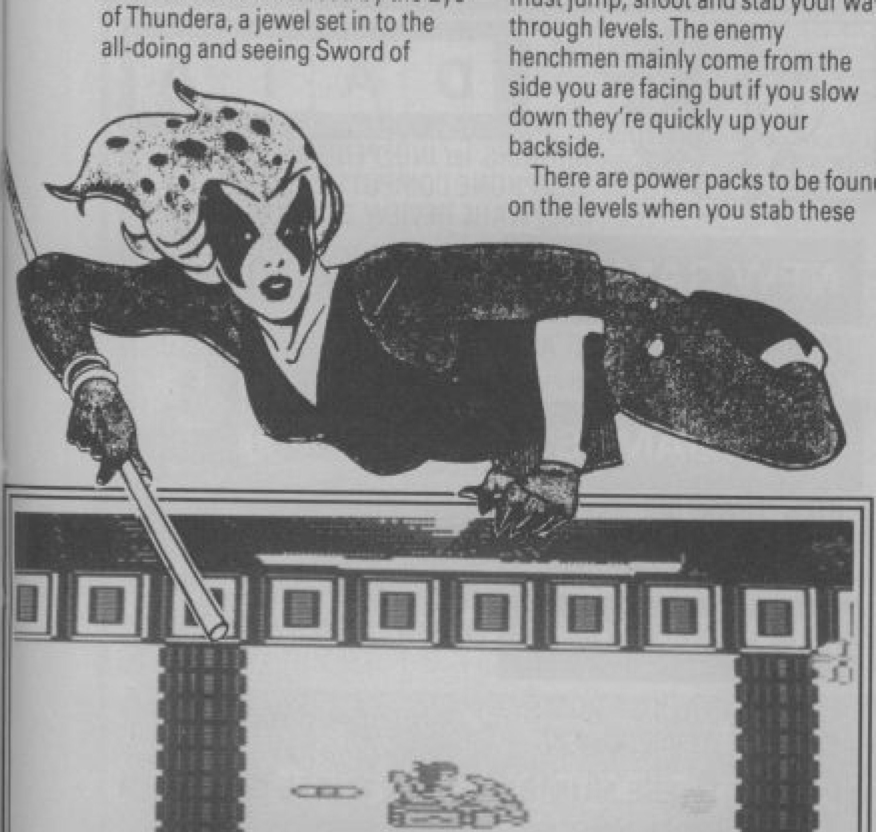
with your sword a coloured box will be revealed underneath. It is through the colour of the box that you can tell what bonuses will be awarded. The bonuses are things such as extra lives, extra time or just plain old bonus points.

Probably the most useful of the bonuses, though, is the gun. You start the game with just a pathetic sword, but once you have the gun it is a different story.

Over the course of the fourteen levels you have the option to pick which to attempt first. There is also a bonus level in which you have the opportunity of a massive points bonus at the end. There are one or two little tweaks in there, like a jet car on level four, and the prospect of a meeting with Mumm-ra in person on level eight.

None of this, however, gives this game the buoyancy to float into the good game category. True it's got some nice digitised pictures, and even the ubiquitous Rob Hubbard title track. It won't take one of the Christmas hot spots, but doubtless many Thundercats fans will be blinded by the licence.

Ferdy Hamilton



▲ **Lion-O gets a move on.**

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	**6** Overall

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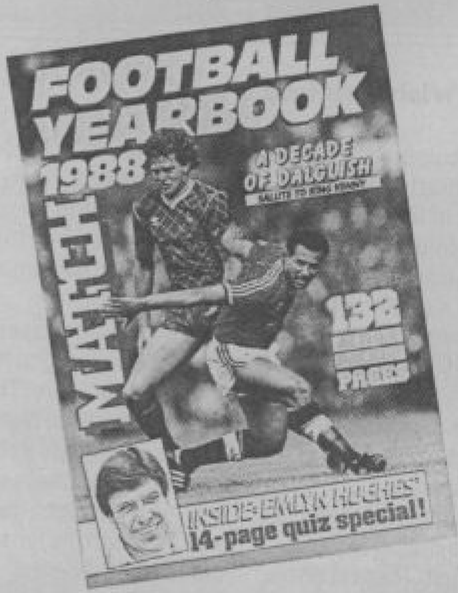
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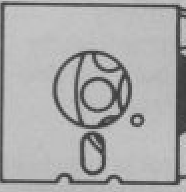
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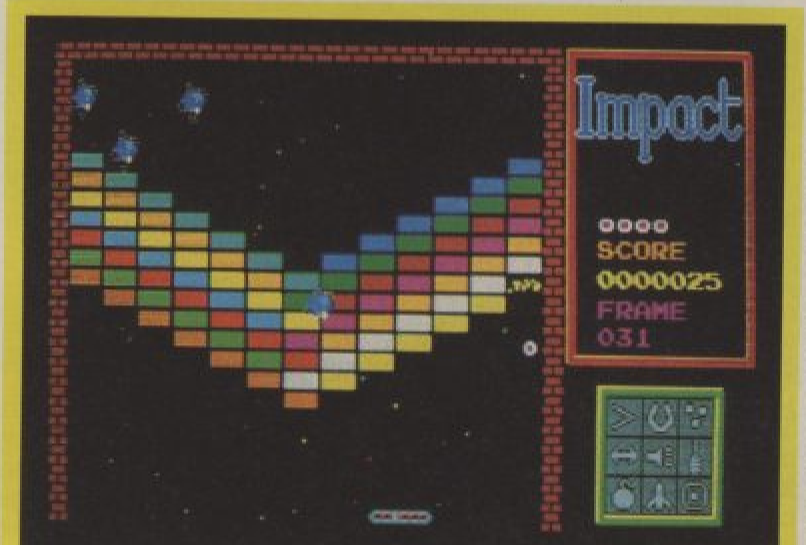
IMPACT



A bonus to be bounced upon.

Now where have we seen this before?

Amiga
ASL (Audiogenic)
Price: £24.95 cass



A wedge to be worn down.

Impact from ASL is a product of the current vogue for dusting down the old classic arcade games, sprucing them up a bit and hoping to gain the nostalgia vote.

This particular classic variant is a version of *Break Out*, now converted from the Atari ST over to the Amiga. It's a case of directly porting it across, rather than specifically rewriting for the Amiga, and thus looks remarkably similar to the ST version (rather more so than true Amiga games should do).

You would think that by now a definitive version of *Break Out* would have been released — and for those Amiga owners who suspect that that might be *Arkanoid*, bear in mind that Ocean/Imagine is still undecided whether to bring *Arkanoid* out for the Amiga or whether to concentrate on new titles.

Impact, however, is a very smooth and neat rendition, with some nice additional touches. If there is still anyone out there who doesn't know the genre: you control a ship, missile base, coloured block — or whatever the plot has decided for this particular version — which you manoeuvre across the bottom of the screen, bouncing balls/weapons/ bombs off its surface to rebound off coloured bricks arranged in patterns in the top half of the screen. Hit all the blocks so that they disappear, and move on to the next screen with a different pattern. Very simple, very playable.

Additional features in *Impact* include extra falling balls/bombs/ swirly things to be caught on your base block for bonuses, plus U-shaped tokens which drop out of the screen. Collect enough of these and you will gain extra powers: more balls to bounce around the screen, extra width to your Base "ship", missiles to fire at the blocks, and so on. There are also some invisible blocks to be located and knocked out before the screens can be completed.

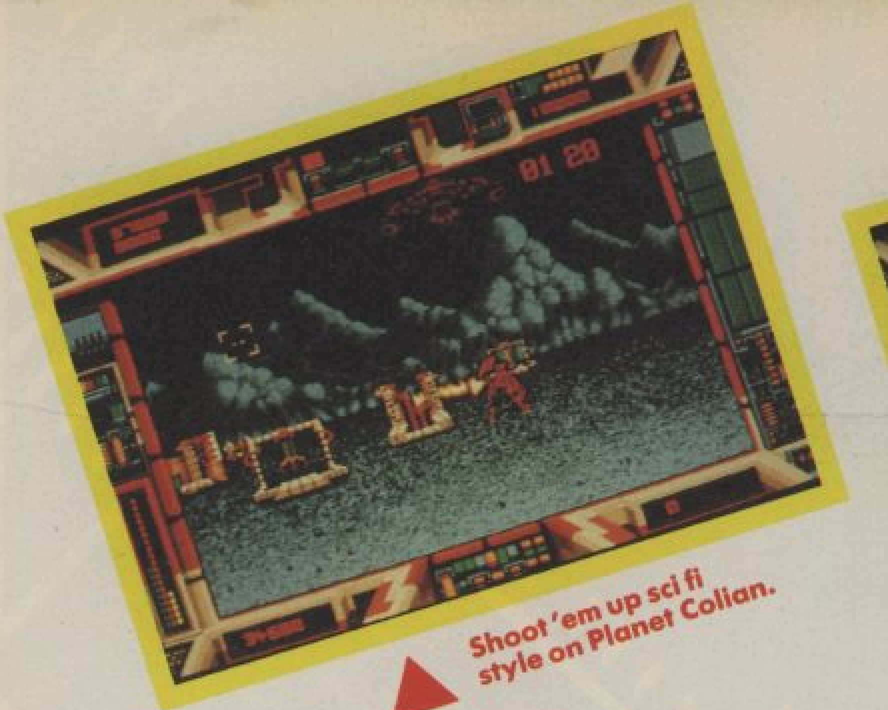
Chief among *Impact's* distinguishing features are the digitised sound and the construction set option. The sound effects were justly praised on the Atari ST version, and they have been ported directly across to the Amiga. The construction set lets you design your own brick arrangement — in addition to the eighty screens contained within the game.

Impact's background scrolling is pretty and the blocks clearly defined, which is no more or less than you would expect on the Amiga, although the graphics are certainly not of the "you'll really believe a man can fly" variety. At times the screen gets a bit cluttered — what with the patterned bricks, swirly bonuses, two or three balls juggling around the screen at once, a celestial-type scrolling backdrop, your own missiles and mystery U-shaped tokens falling out all over the place. Sure, it's all part of the game, but trying to decipher which of thse whizzing objects is yours is panic-inducing.

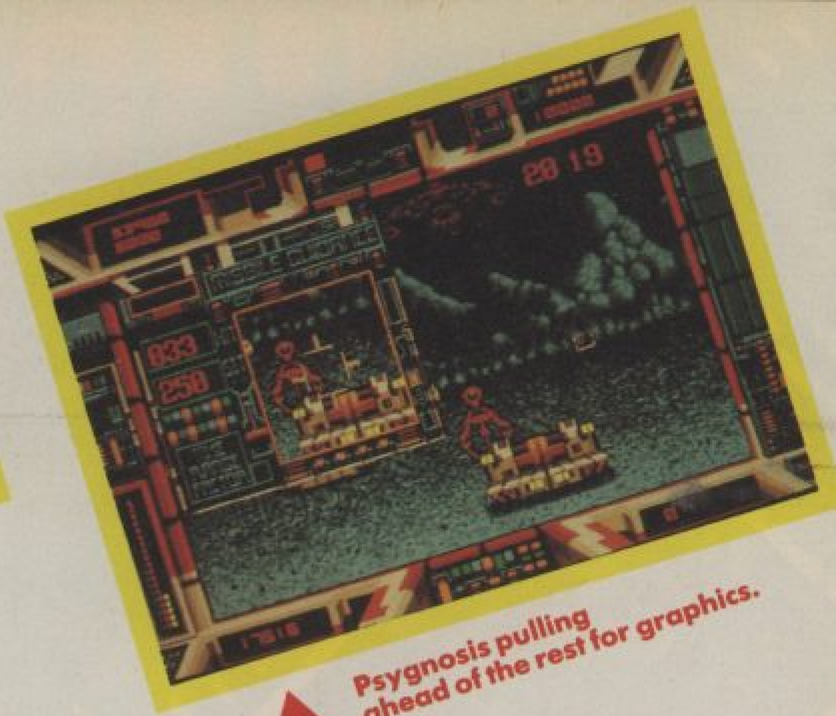
If you bought your Amiga to play games with graphics that should be in the National Portrait Gallery, stereo sound to wear headphones to, innovative thought-provoking gameplay etc, then you won't want to have anything to do with *Impact*, and the packaging makes no bones about it: "Trapped in a 1970s arcade game" it proudly proclaims on the inlay. Impact should be filed firmly under "golden oldie".

Christina Erskine

Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	6
Sound	7
Toughness	7
Endurance	7
Value	6
Overall	**7**



Shoot 'em up sci fi style on Planet Colian.



Psygnosis pulling ahead of the rest for graphics.

TERRORPO

AMIGA

My biggest worry was that Terrorpods was something to do with the appalling Gerry Anderson series that is shown well before anyone I know is awake on Saturday morning. Thankfully this turned out not to be the case.

Terrorpods is the latest Amiga game from Psygnosis, and without question the best yet. Their previous relesases had ranged from OK (*Deep Space, Arena)* through poor (*Barbarian*) to absolutely pathetic (*Brattacus*).

Whether or not you like the games Psygnosis release you have to hand one thing to them, they produce very natty packaging indeed. With artwork by none other than Roger Dean (apparently a man of some repute in the Sci-Fi world) a lavish box, and the now ubiquitous novella (although thankfully this one is very short).

Somewhere on earth there must be a computer that is programmed to write storylines for games that have no real plot. All you need to do is type in some evil sounding name (Terrorpods for example), and the computer will print out a suitable (if immensely boring) novella of any specified length.

Back to the game. You take on the role of a man with no name (go on punk, make my day!). You have been sent by the powers that be to Colian, a planet on the edge of System 7 that is becoming the centre of some pretty heavy action, as far as goodies versus baddies is concerned.

The problem is that the baddies, in this case called 'The Empire' (heard that somewhere before?) have decided to attempt to take control of Colian, so that they can reap the reward of its immense mineral wealth. Your task is to stop them from removing all the mineral wealth from Colian and discover how the Terropods are made, and obtain the components to work out how to destroy them.

Once the game has loaded, and the beautifully detailed loading scenario has finally ended, you are presented with a choice of national flags. Once you have made the rather partisan decision as to which country you belong, the game begins.

The first view from your ship is that of the landscape around you, and a plethora of different mining and construction sites. Also in view, in an ominous shade of dark blue, is the 'Empire Mother Ship'. Unfortunately it is not possible to blow the Mother Ship up just yet, so wasting bullets in that direction is pointless.

Using both joystick and mouse control; joystick to move your ship about and to control surface drover

The empire mother-ship moves above the planet.







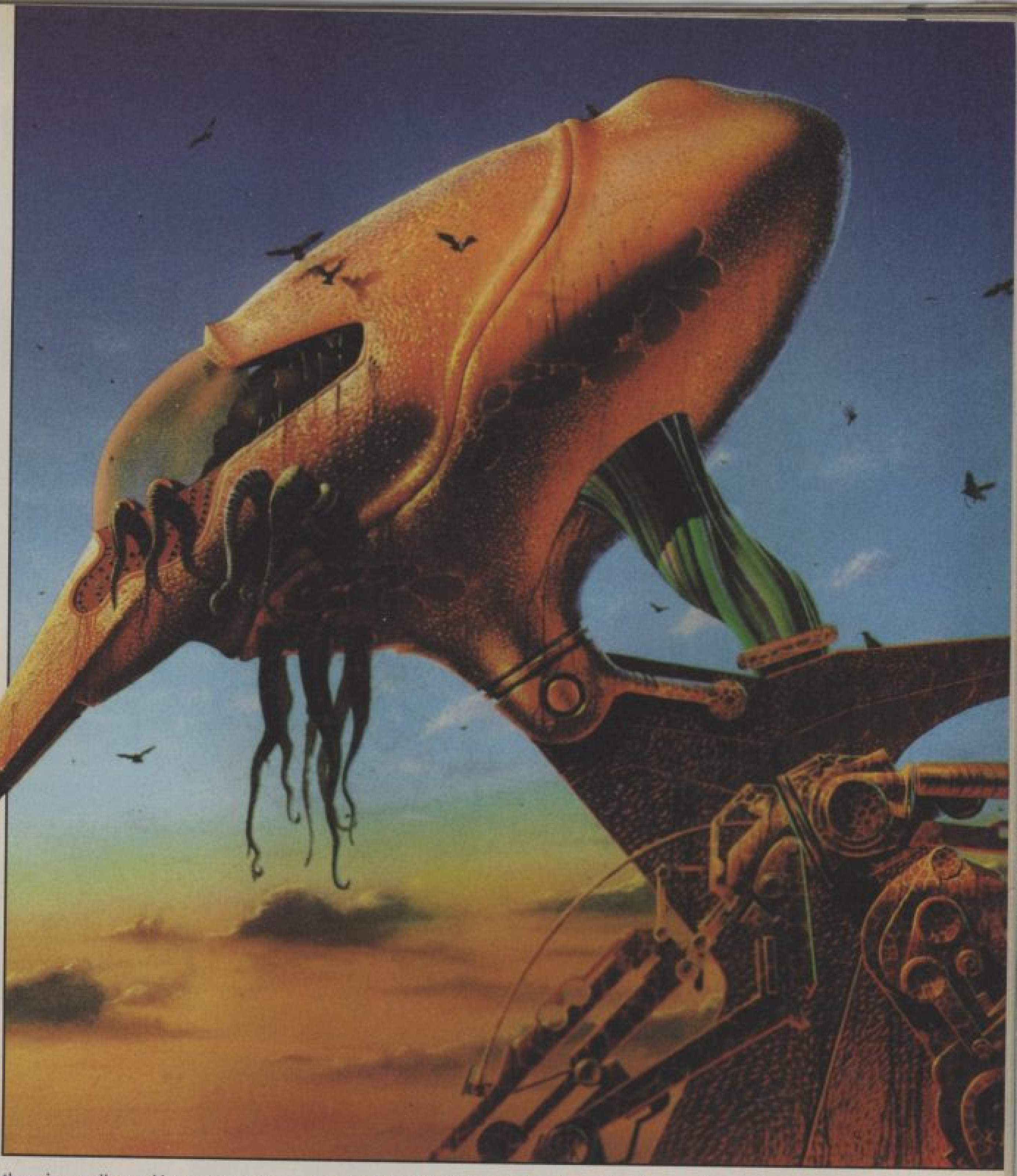
Terrorpods — daft plot but great game.

(more about this later), mouse to control the information cross-hair and the position at which the phasar will be fired.

For most people, the first ten or fifteen minutes with *Terrorpods* will be very daunting. The instructions, though both on-screen and in the fold-out manual, are not quite as easy to understand as they could be; and even getting far enough into the game to blast a few aliens takes quite a while.

If you do spend some time reading the manual, and are then prepared to play the game 'blind' for a while, you will discover that, although it is quite well hidden,

ODS





there is a really cracking game deep down. It takes concepts from all the great space computer games; *Elite, Starglider, Star Wars,* etc, and comes up with a game that has all the ingredients for an instant classic; trading, strategy, blasting, mapping, and more.

Having played a wide selection of Amiga games, I am quite used to trading off really good graphics and sound against good gameplay. It seems to be the norm that you can have one or the other, but not both (*Defender of the Crown* springs to mind). *Terrorpods* on the other hand gives you the best of both worlds. The graphics really are excellent, with effective use of metallic objects and intricately designed backgrounds.

Perhaps surprisingly the animation is excellent too. Unlike Psygnosis' previous games, *Terrorpods* does not use 'flick-scrolling', something that this magazine has complained about in length previously! The scrolling and the animation of all the characters when they metamorphose or get shot is remarkable, and at last worthy of the Amiga's potential.

The music and spot effects are also excellent and although I didn't have my Amiga wired into my stereo, so I can't tell if the music is stereo or mono, but anyway it's certainly bloody good (though I'd still rather listen to Eric B).

Overall, I spent many hours happily playing with *Terrorpods*. It has almost everything a good game should, and is certainly one of the best games yet produced for the Amiga (particularily in the UK). If companies such as Microdeal and Psygnosis continue producing games as good as these, the Amiga really does have a chance.

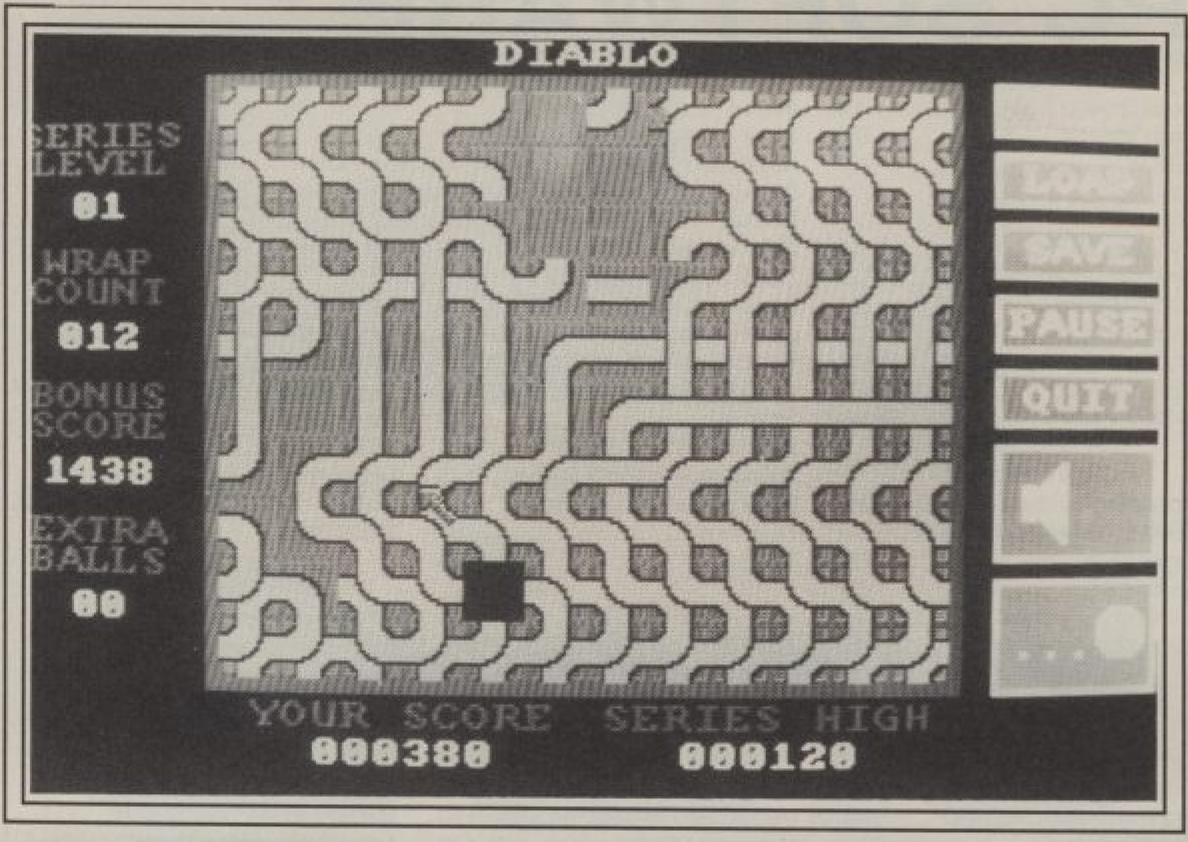
Francis Jago



Game control requires mouse and joystick.

Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall



An ingenious block puzzle for the Amiga? Yuk!

DIABLO

Robtek/ Diamond Games Price: £19.95 cass

The sliding block puzzle has a lot to answer for — particularly now that it has been let loose from its rightful place at the bottom of Christmas stockings, and deemed a suitable subject for computer games.

Diablo is a game based on the sliding block principle, and evidentally designed as mental exercise and a break from blasting the universe to bits or mingling with pixies. Unfortunately, and this comes from someone who enjoys "mental puzzle" type games, it's boring.

The screen portrays a squared grid (12 across by 10 down), each square with a section of "track" on it. A ball runs along the track, and your job is to keep the track continuous by moving the squares so that the ball always has somewhere to move on to.

As the ball completes one square, that piece of track is wiped off the screen; the object is to clear each segment before moving on to the next grid with a different pattern of track. For the first fifty squares completed, the ball will hit a dead end at the corners of the grid — after that it will reappear at the opposite side of the grid.

The skill obviously lies in foreseeing where the dead ends will fail and manipulating the squares so that they become linked up. This isn't particularly difficult, and throughout the game, you are helped by the fact that the ball moves at snail's pace.

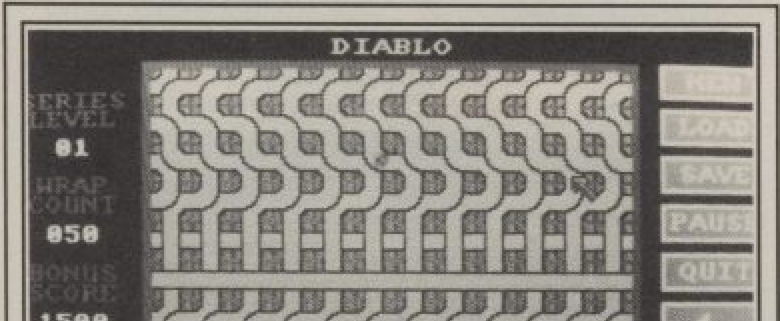
The ball can be speeded up considerably by clicking on the "hyper-ball" option, but it speeds up so much that it is only really of use when you have a long stretch of clear track set up.

Some variety is offered by giving you the chance to play "series" screens, which follow the same grid pattern from level one upwards each time, or "random" screens, which are freshly generated each time.

But that's all there is to it. It would have been nice if the grid/sliding block idea had been varied much more over the screens, so that completely different challenges were presented in later stages, but frankly it's appeal palls fairly quickly.

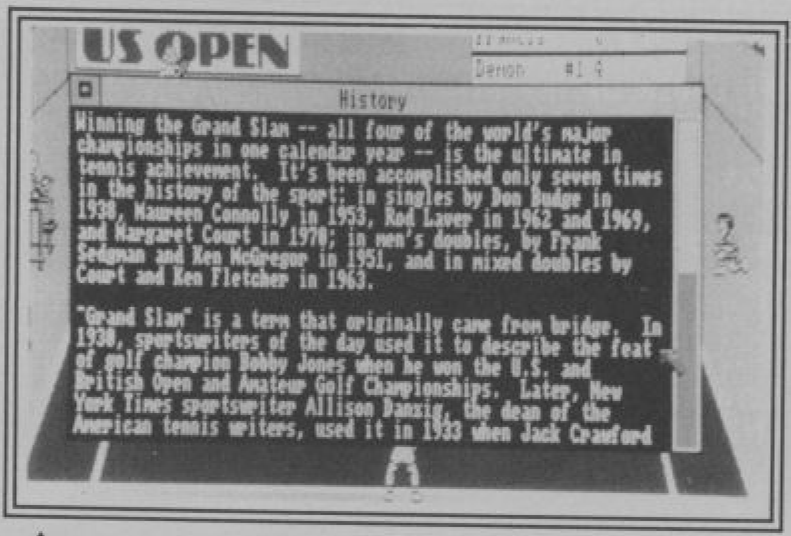
Besides which, what on earth is a game of this type doing on the Amiga in the first place? *Diablo* is the sort of game that just might have been called "ingenious" on the Spectrum two or three years ago but its certainly no advertisement for the Amiga's capabilities.

Christina Erskine



Graphics 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4 Overall



▲ **Detail which Dan Maskell would be proud of . . .**

Grand Slam

Eidersoft
Amiga
Price £14.95

Although I may not be able to play the game in real life (my flailing attempts on a Sunday morning have something of a reputation where I live) I am an avid armchair player, and after many hours of Wimbledon and the like, I am pretty good at criticising most professional players.

You can imagine, therefore, that I was terribly eager to take the opportunity to review the first tennis game for the Amiga. The game arrived in an odd, triangular box that although pretty at first proves incredibly annoying if you, like me, happen to want to keep your games on a shelf.

Called *Grand Slam*, the game has been released by Paradox Software, a company owned by Eidersoft. Although this is the company responsible for releasing it, it was in fact written by a third company, the German based Infinity, and they are the ones who are really to blame!

The game allows you to take on the role of a top tennis star playing in the four Grand Slam tournaments; Wimbledon, Australian Open, French Open and the US Open. The programmers have managed to cram an awful lot into the full 512K that the game uses, but as is often the case they forgot the gameplay somewhere in all the panic.

Once loaded, you can choose whether you want to practice or play a tournament. Either way, you can adjust various aspects of your equipment; there are Wood, Graphite or Metal rackets to choose from, and you can also change the string tension. If you choose to play a tournament, you must then decide which one.

The main difference between the four tournaments are the surfaces, and the programmers have actually managed to make it realistic enough that grass courts do indeed play faster than hard, with clay in between. The game has some excellent features relating to this, and it is quite possible to play really well on clay and yet not manage anything on grass. A bit like Ivan Lendl really.

To look at the package, and to read the accompanying bumph, you would think that *Grand Slam Tennis* was the most completely fabby game ever released on the Amiga. Unfortunately this is not the case. The graphics are pretty good, with detailed players, and even an umpire and ball-boy.

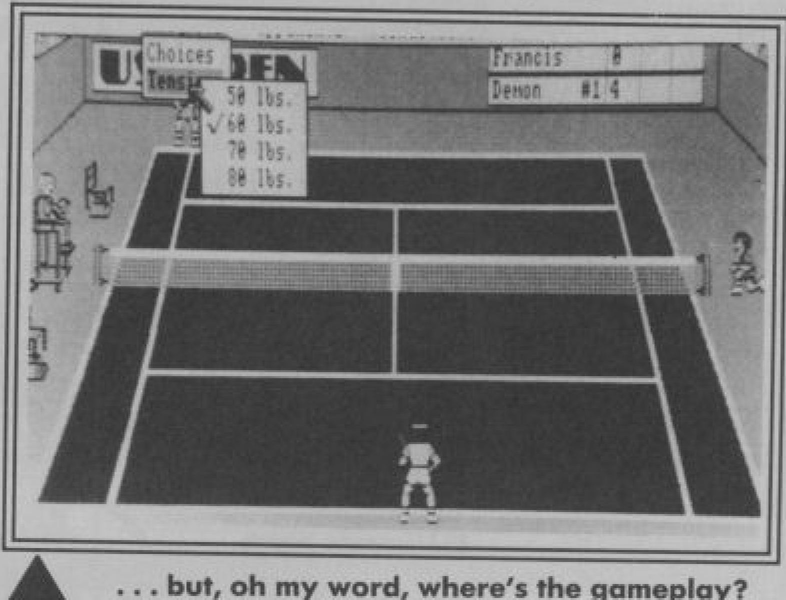
The animation however leaves a great deal to be desired with the characters jerking wildly about. There appears also to be little, if any, error detection, as even being within a few yards of the ball is enough to make perfect contact, thus creating long and excrutiatingly boring rallies. More to the point, if you do manage to get close enough to the ball to play what you would imagine to be a great shot, you invariably (and inexplicably) miss.

What is quite impressive is the sound. Sampled it may be, but it fits well with the game and the spot effects are particularly impressive.

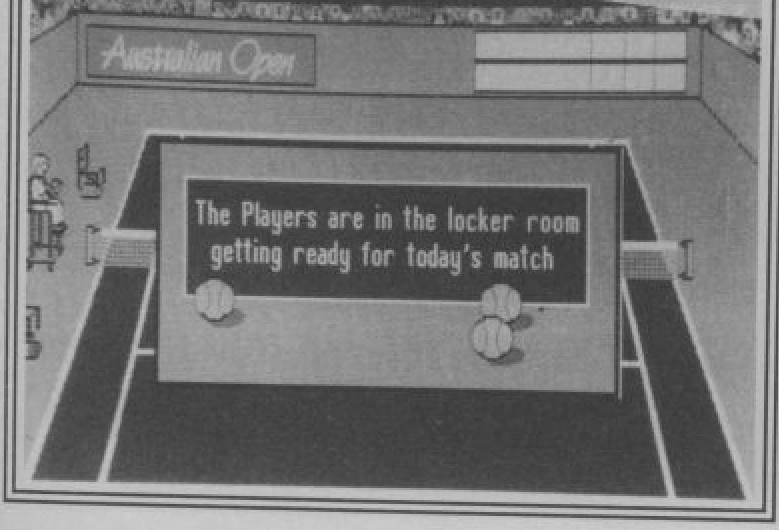
Grand Slam is a potentially good game spoiled by programmers who obviously thought it was more important to have vast quantities of pull-down menus and options than a really good and enjoyable game. The concept is a good one, but this game falls very wide of the mark.

Sorry boys, but this is another no-no for the Amiga, I do get tired of criticising games for this machine, but the sooner software houses realise they cannot just release rubbish and expect it to sell, the better!

Slobodan Jago



▲ **. . . but, oh my word, where's the gameplay?**



▼ **Pity they can't stay in there!**

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2
Overall

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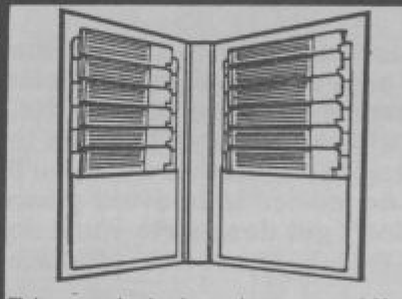
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QUEDEX

We asked Thalamus programmer Stavros Fasoulas for his very own tips on Quedex. Here they are. The best way to master Quedex is to practise one plane at a time. Once learned, leave it alone and practise a new on. The planes have been organised this way, though difficulty increases. If you disagree simply use the plane programmer option on the title screen to mark the planes' appearances in a different order.

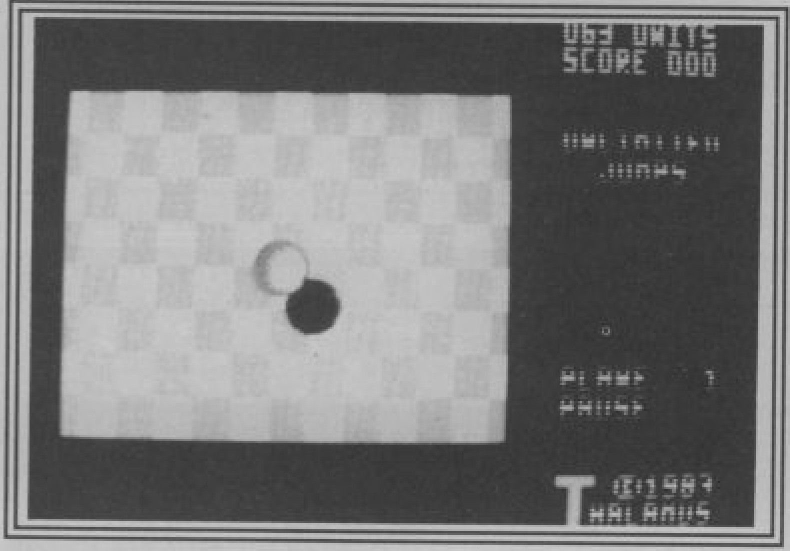
Once you have mastered all (or most) of the planes you'll be able to play more with the plane programmer since the planes turn into harder ones when you've completed some before. This is where the strategy comes in — trying to figure out which order is the most beneficial one.

The first thing to do is to learn how to control the ball. That will appear quite easy at first, but you'll soon notice that you need to learn a lot more ball control, particularly on plane 10, where you have to learn to decelerate really fast to zero speed otherwise you'll fall off the playforms. So my advice is to avoid plane 10 for quite a while. But don't get desperate you'll do it one day and anyway *t is* a quest for ultimate dexterity.

PLAY TO WIN

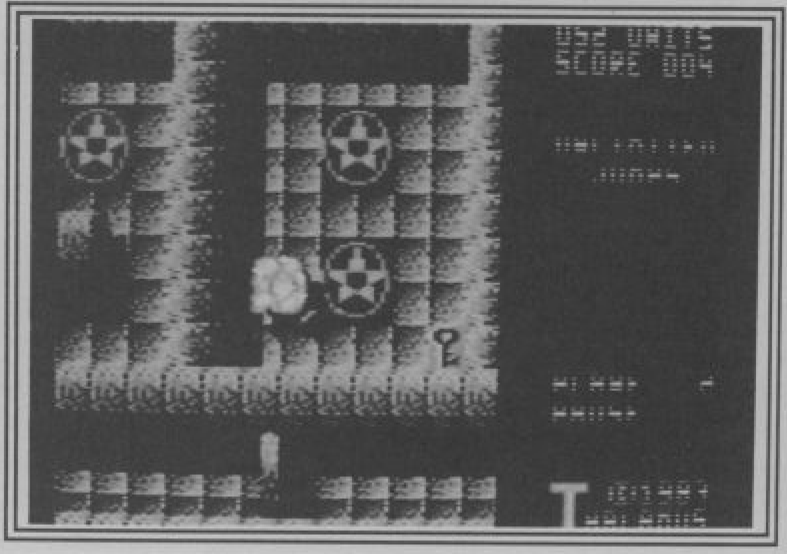
PLANE 1

In sub game two the flashing squares are always in the same places, so learn them. Sub four is random. In sub five try to get into the rhythm of "slalom".



PLANE 2

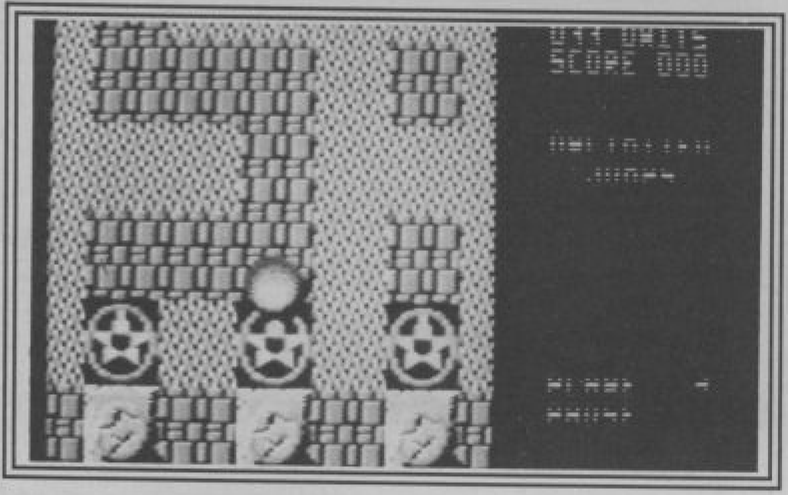
Check everywhere carefully to find all the keys. The teleports always take you to the same places so you must learn the "newtork". Also, keep in mind that this plane is only a little bit higher than the size of your screen and then it just repeats the whole thing again. (Just imagine yourself walking round the outside of a pole.)



PLAY TO WIN

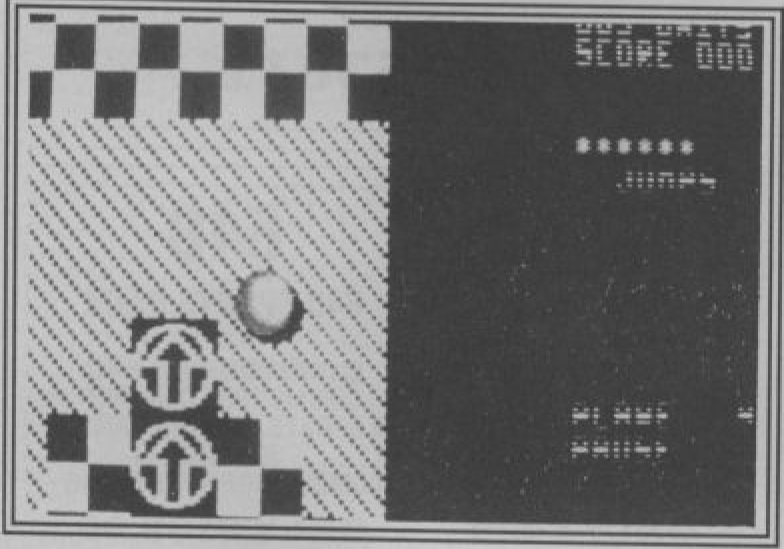
PLANE 3

There are sixteen different places where the four amulets can be hidden. Soon you will notice something organised in the random placing of the amulets. Once you've found one or two you can be pretty sure where the others are.



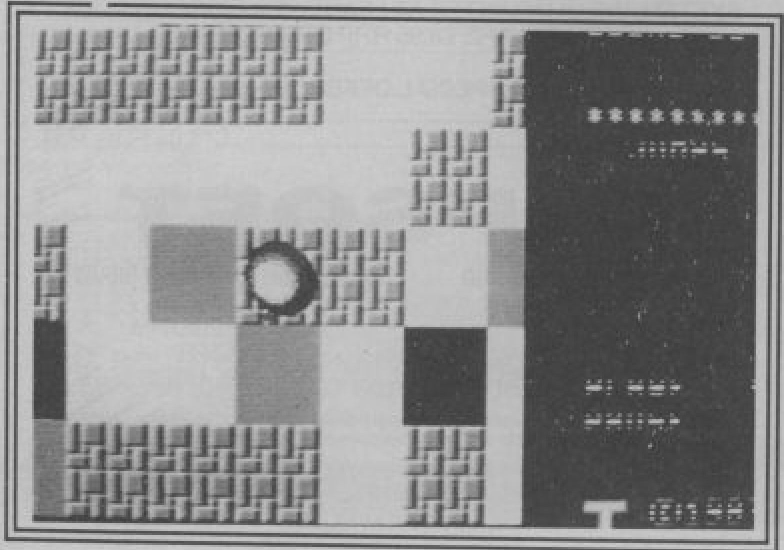
PLANE 4

Try to avoid hitting the blocks at all costs and use your jumps. Alternatively save the jumps for dodging electrical seas (they reduce time units much less than hitting a block).



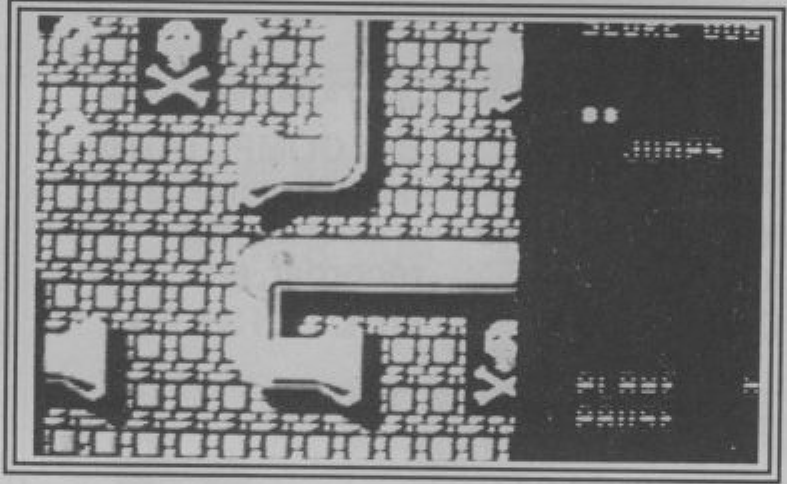
PLANE 5

I can do this one in 16 seconds. (*Smart arse — Ed.*) To do the same try to understand the way the colouring system works and you might just discover the way. It's a sort of mini-Rubik's Cube which can be completed really easily once you know the trick.



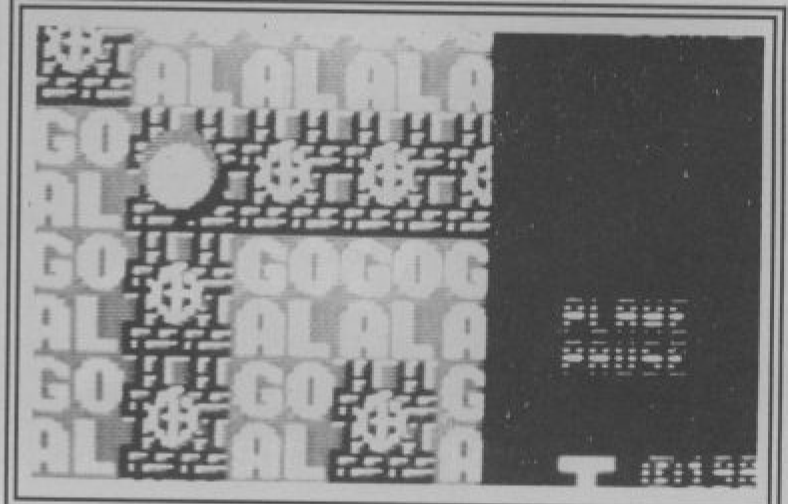
PLANE 6

There are always four invisible question marks to be found and one of them will create a new set of four questionmarks. There are three sets to be discovered before goal appears. But don't pick the set replacer until you've tried the others otherwise you might lose because it's a pretty big area to cover and sometimes it will take some time to realise what the chosen questionmark caused.



PLANE 7

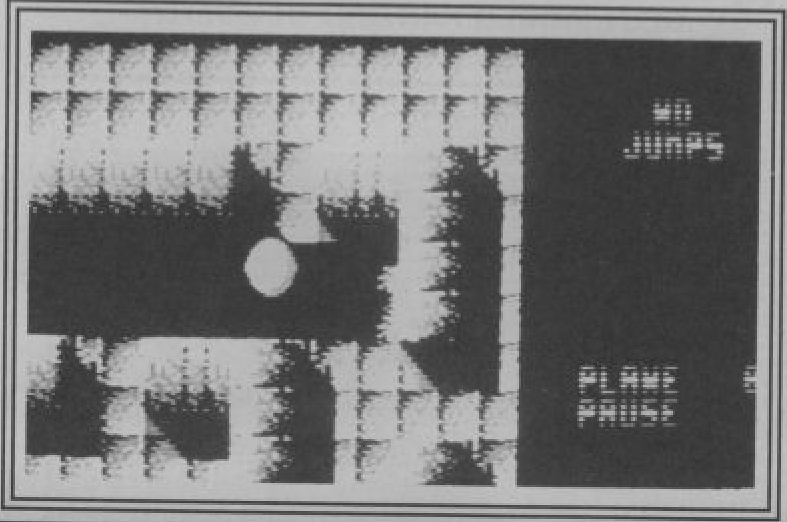
I cannot help you much here except to ask is it worth trying to get all the time amulets in nasty places? You might lose more than you gain.



QUEDEX

PLANE 8

There are four different "quests" indicated by the colour of the labyrinth. The "quest" is chosen in the beginning of each game so you can easily restart the game if you didn't get the one you wanted. I would suggest to try to learn green "quest" first.



PLAY TO WIN

C64

Lazer Force

This program below will give you unlimited lives when you type it in and run it, then follow the instructions printed after the listing.

```
0 REM ★★ BY D.SLACK ★★
10 FOR X=416 TO 423
20 READ D:POKEX,D:C=C+
D:NEXT
30 IF C=974 THEN 50
40 PRINT''DATA ERROR'':END
50 POKE43,0:LOAD
60 DATA169,230,141,123,
123,76,0,112
```

Run the program and press play on tape. When a SYNTAX ERROR is displayed on the screen type:

POKE43,1 (Return)
60 SYS416 (Return)
RUN (Return)

The game will now load and run and you will have unlimited ships to play with.

Toad Force

POKE 12216,234:POKE 12217,234:POKE 12218,234
(ENDLESS H2)
POKE 12150,234:POKE 12151,234:POKE 12152,234
(ENDLESS O2)
POKE 12156,234:POKE 12157,234:POKE 12158,234
(ENDLESS TEMP.)
POKE 11828,234:POKE 11829,234:POKE 11830,234
(ENDLESS POWER)
It's in basic so run it

Renegade

This program below will either let you choose the number of lives that you want, or let you have unlimited lives when you type it in and run it.

```
0 REM ★★ BY D.SLACK ★★
10 FOR X=415 TO 463
20 READ B:POKEX,B:C=C+
B:NEXT
30 IF C=6053 THEN 50
40 PRINT''DATA ERROR'':END
50 PRINT''WOULD YOU LIKE
UNLIMITED LIVES Y/N?''
60 GET U$:IF U$<>''Y'' AND
U$<>''N'' THEN 60
70 IF U$=''N'' THEN 90
80 POKE452,0:SYS415
90 PRINT''ENTER NUMBER OF
LIVES 1-255''
100 INPUT N:IF N>255 OR N<
THEN 100
110 POKE457,N:SYS415
120 DATA32,44,247,32,108,
245,169,32,141,202
130 DATA2, 169,181,141,203,2,
169,1,141,204
140 DATA2,96,141,255,255,
169,195,141,148,1
150 DATA169,1,141,149,1,96,
169,3,141,206
160 DATA164,169,2,141,33,
158,76,203,163
```

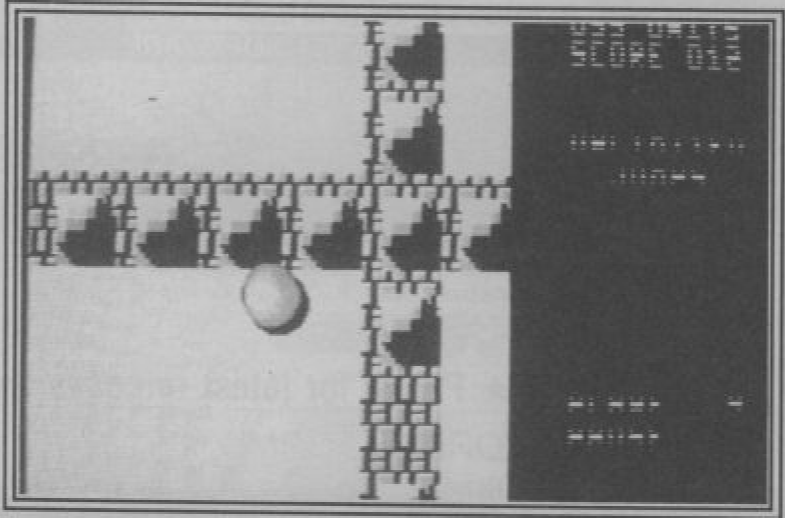
Now that you have typed in the

C U PLAY TO WIN

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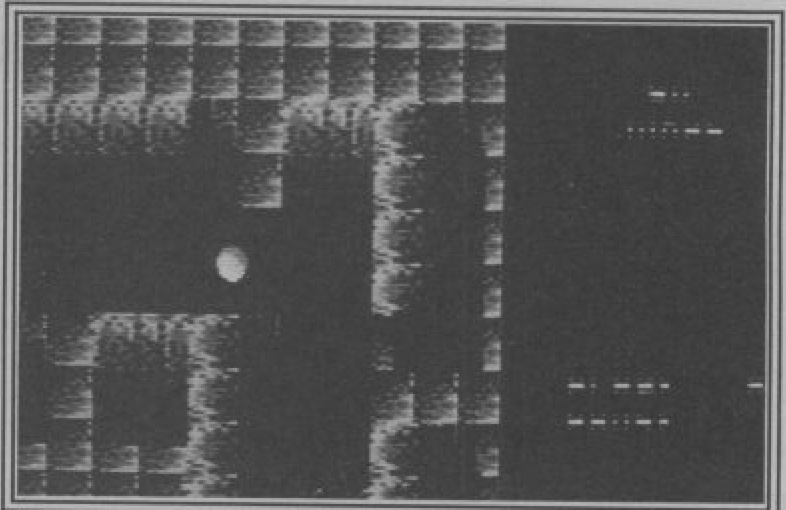
PLANE 9

Keep destroying the cubes as fast as you can. You should be able to destroy one row of cubes with the strength of one cross. If you can't destroy them so fast, then you'll just have to have plenty of extra time before going there.



PLANE 10

Go there only when you can master earlier planes — or keep reading CU's play to win pages. Who knows — there might be an exclusive guide to PLANE 10 next month. In this shot we see the Ed failing miserably on level 9.



program, run it. When the game loads the computer will not say that it has found the game, but it will still load as normal.

David Slack

Bride of Frankenstein

```
POKE 4487,123:POKE
4488,234:POKE 4489,234:SYS
4096 (START THE GAME)
```

Hysteria

```
10 FOR I=384 TO
436:READG:T=T+G:POKE
I,G:NEXT
20 IF T<> 4813 THEN PRINT
"DATA ERROR":END
25 PRINT "REWIND TAPE &
PRESS SPACE":POKE
198,0:WAIT 198,1 SYS384
30 SYS384
100 DATA162,1,160,0,132,183,
32,186,255
110 DATA32,213,255,162,26,
189,154,1,157
120 DATA122,9,202,16,247,
76,16,8,169,48
130 DATA141,34,5,169,4,141,
35,5,76,0,5
140 DATA5,77,73,67,82,79,169
44,141,155
150 DATA9,76,0,8
READY
```

Pór Winzell
Sweden

CORRECTION

Roadrunner

Line 40 — 691 should have read 169

AMIGA

Faery Tale Adventure

```
10 REM This Program gives you
every Key,Spell,Potion
20 REM Gold,energy etc,apart
from the ones that could
30 REM spoil the game for
you.Before using have a blank
40 REM disk ready named
USER,AND THEN SAVE your
GAME file TO
50 REM The disk under the Letter
A.
60 REM Now Boot up
AMIGABASIC and type in the
program.
70 REM
80 PRINT "Faery Tale Hacks By
ANDY GRIFO"
90 OPEN "R",#1,
"USER:A.faery",1:FIELD#1,1
AS N$
100 RSET N$=CHR$(100):L=
2:ST=31:EN=38:GOSUB 280
110 ST=107:EN=107:GOSUB
280
120 RSET N$=CHR$(255):ST=
32:EN=38:GOSUB 280
130 ST=108:EN=108:GOSUB
280
140 L=1:X=243:GOSUB 310:IF
B=0 THEN 160
150 ST=X:EN=250:RSET N$=
CHR$(1):GOSUB 280:GOTO 200
160 X=199:GOSUB 310:IF B=0
THEN 180
170 ST=X:EN=206:RSET N$=
CHR$(1):GOSUB 280:GOTO 200
180 X=155:GOSUB 310:IB B=0
THEN PRINT "Error":STOP
190 ST=X:EN=162:RSET: N$=
CHR$(1):GOSUB 280
200 INPUT "Do You Want To
Jump Location (y/n)";M$
210 IF M$="n" THEN 270
220 PRINT "(p)ixel Grove (i)sle of
Sorcery (t)ambry (g)rief"
230 INPUT "Choose O faithful
One";F$
240 IF F$="p" THEN RESTORE
320 ELSE IF F$="1" THEN
RESTORE 330
250 IF F$="t" THEN RESTORE
340 ELSE IF F$="g" THEN
RESTORE 350
260 FOR A=88 TO 92:READ
B:RSET N$=
CHR$(B):PUT#1,A:NEXT
270 PRINT "So It Was Written,
So It Was Done":STOP
280 FOR A=ST TO EN STEP
L:PUT#1,A:NEXT
290 IF L=2 THEN RETURN ELSE
RSET N$=CHR$(220)
300 FOR B=EN+1 TO EN+
14:PUT#1,B:NEXT:RETURN
310 GET#1,X:B=
ASC(N$):RETURN
320 DATA 4,24,138,46,86
330 DATA 1,61,243,27,239
340 DATA 0,74,227,61,139
350 DATA 0,44,17,114,6
```

Andy Grifo

Goldrunner

<F5>:Gives ship absolute protection
U&I:Switches to next screen

David Clarke
Worcester

PLAY TO WIN

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COMICS

Oh wow! Comics are cutting the crap and getting back to make people squeal and shout. Mike Pattenden rummages through his collection . . .

Comics are for kids, right? They're the things that litter your room up for years until your mum screams at you she'll burn them. Eventually you says 'OK, burn 'em'. Wrong dummy. Comics are serious. Comics are no longer as old-fashioned as Superman's underpants — or as clean. Comics are art.

Over the last four or five years comics have undergone a revival of sorts. Not that they ever faded away simply that they no longer retained their sharpness. Superheroes were Captain This or So-and-So Man. They were still obsessed by groups of weirdo do-gooders in dodgy outfits made from tarty tights. Comics had gone nowhere for forty years.

Let's just have a quick look at their history. Strap on your ultra sonic time goggles and titanium tights because we're going on a superfast journey through the history of comics. Hang on as Egyptian hieroglyphics, Babylonian art, Greek myth, Viking legend, the Bayeux tapestry and Benjamin Franklin all disappear in a blur. Still with me? Fine, because the comic genre grew



Swamp Thing — the coolest CND veggie around.

slowly but sneakily over hundreds of years until this century. Then with mass production methods and the growth of newspapers there was a comic explosion bigger than Hulk's bottom. Kapow! America was overrun with cheap novelettes and full length strips.

The first masked man to don a Jane Fonda outfit and conceal his identity was the Phantom, a purple pimpernel. More followed. Suddenly American comics were populated by masked avengers dedicated to stamping out crime. The biggest name in the Thirties was *The Shadow,* a sinister black clad crusader (ring any bells?). In fact he was the subject of hundreds of pulp novels. It was only recently that Howard Chaykin, doyen of First Comics and creator of *American Flagg* put him in graphic form. Read it for yourselves, but beware, it is very complicated.

The Shadow was the inspiration for many characters but the most important, arguably the greatest ever, was Batman or The Bat-Man as he was first called. Orphaned when his parents were murdered by thugs he swore vengeance on crime. His origins are retold in the recent series of graphic novels called *The Dark Knight* created by Frank Miller which proved to be such a massive hit. They appeared in four parts last year and have since been reprinted in a graphic novel. The four parts are already collectors items, the first selling for £30, the collection for about £80. That makes me feel very smug, I've got the lot!

Batman was a huge hit. He had this dark, mysterious appeal that made him immensely menacing. He was a loner stalking his prey at night. The introduction of Robin the Boy Wonder didn't really lose him any appeal either. It gave him a foil as they waded into crooks like the Joker, the Penguin and the Riddler.

Even more enduring is Superman, the other great comic hero of the Twentieth Century. Like Batman he was an oprhan, a survivor from the planet Krypton endowed with superpowers here on earth — you know the story. It took several years for him to metamorphose into the Man of Steel, but with x-ray vision, the ability to fly, superhearing, heat vision and invulnerability, how could he fail? Superman became the hottest property in comics, and has since made the most successful comic movie star. But don't despair Batman fans, a film is on the way based on the caped crusader.

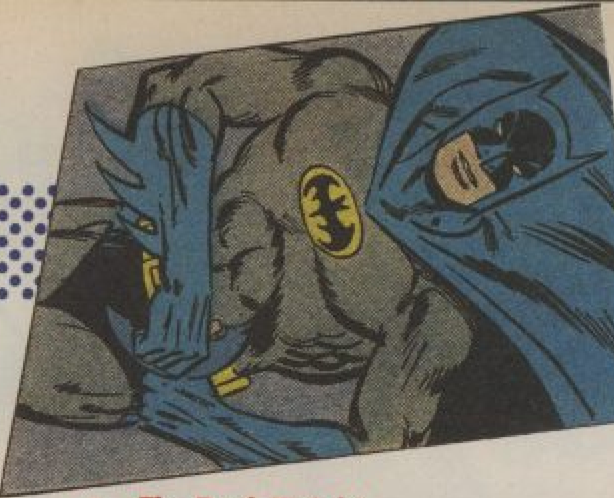
These two greats started an avalanche of strange superheroes possessed of bizarre powers, who dressed in funny cosis and had dodgy taste in footwear. Captain America soon appeared, the heroic embodiment of the American Dream. There was superhero grossout with the likes of Sub-Mariner, The Green Lantern, Spiderman, Captain Marvel (and his sister Mary!) and Wonder-Woman. When they weren't righting the world's wrongs along (they did a lot of sound Nazi-bashing in the Forties) they were teaming up and doing old pals acts. By the Seventies, bar occasional moments of inspiration comics were dull and stereotyped. The characters were wooden, the scripts corny, the stories predictable.

So what happened to change things? Well we must take some of the credit. "We" being the British. For years comics had been definitively American. Gotham City was New York, Superman leapt over skyscrapers, the dialogue was American, the scenes American. It took us to develop a fresh approach to things.

The Brit scene has been dominated by two comics for exactly fifty years: The Dandy and

OW!

S HIT BACK



The Dark Knight returns — Batman back on form.

The Beano are about to celebrate their half century. But another comic has just celebrated its first ten years, and it is arguably the most influential of the last decade. I talk of course, thrillseekers, of *2000AD.* Originally launched to cash in on the Star Wars boom of the late Seventies, it has gone from strength to strength to become a major showcase for British writers and artists.

One strip in particular gave the old superhero shmucks a good kick in the crotch. *Judge Dredd* is the story of a world in the future that is massively overpopulated, highly urbanized with mile-high tower blocks, and violent. Megacity One is bursting at the seams, there is high unemployment because of mechanisation with a resultant rise in crime. It is a nasty place to live. The situation calls for desperate measures to keep order. The city is run by Judges who apprehend criminals, try them on the spot and sentence them. Most rhadamanthine of all is Judge Dredd, a no-nonsense hardcase who makes James Anderton and Clint Eastwood look like Care Bears. He *is* the Law!

Judge Dredd set the tone for many of the strips in 2000AD. *Strontium Dog* is the story of a mutant bounty hunter, *Nemesis* is a warlock dedicated to stopping the evil Torquemada from ridding the universe of aliens — the stories carry explicitly anti-racist themes. *Roque Trooper* is the taie of a genetic commando and his bio-chip buddies entangled in a never-ending war.

Probably the most consistent many of the strips in 2000AD. *Strontium Dog* is the story of a



Lone Wolf and Cub hacks a path through the dross.

mutant bounty hunter, *Nemesis* is a warlock dedicated to stopping the evil Torquemada from ridding the universe of aliens — the stories carry explicitly anti-racist themes. *Rogue Trooper* is the tale of a genetic commando and his bio-chip buddies entangled in a never-ending war.

Probably the most consistent writer to appear in 2000 AD is Alan Moore. His strips include *DR and Quinch*, the hilariously depraved tales of a couple of inter-galactic hooligans, and more recently, *The Ballad of Halo Jones,* based on the adventures of an ordinary woman somewhere in the future.

Before long 2000AD was held in high esteem and its approach to comic writing was breathing fresh life into some fat old superheroes. It took another effort from Alan Moore to shake everyone up. This time he took over an American comic, a typical monster strip, and turned it into one of the most influential characters ever. DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* was a standard weird creature tale until Moore took it by its short and curly leaves and transformed it into a tale of life, death and the occult; of natural forces against darkness. His writing took the comic on from pulp narrative and made it into literature. The artwork of illustrators Totleben and Wrightson was stunning. *Swamp Thing* became a modern gothic novel of chilling proportions. Moore left after DC asked him to conform to the moralistic American Comics Code to kick still more life into superheroes with *The Watchmen.* Meanwhile a new wave of comics had begun, with Frank Miller revamping (sorry) *Batman*, and the appearance of titles like *American Flagg* and *Love And Rockets.*

Comics have been fertile areas for computer licencing. It's no surprise that *2000 AD* should provide the inspiration for many. First to appear, solar years ahead of the pack, was Quicksilva's game based on *Strontium Dog.* Since then we've had *Rogue Trooper* from Piranha, *Judge Dredd* himself from Melbourne House and *Nemesis* from Martech.

Sadly most of the 2000AD licences have failed to deliver the punch and wit of their comic counterparts. Too often unimaginative software houses have plumped for the age old platforms and maze stuff without looking any further. The promise of interaction, always there, never happens. A good long spell in the iso cubes for the programmers might do the trick.

Shortly after Stronty was signed up for an arcade game, Scott Adams moved in on the Marvel characters. *Hulk, Spiderman,* and the *Fantastic Four* were all turned, with a reasonable degree of success, into adventures. Since then we've had *Asterix* (vile), *Superman* (superflop) and *Batman* (batdroppings). Only *Dan Dare* and the *Spy vs Spy* series have emerged with their reputation intact. Virgin and First Star at least had the grace to pay some attention



"Listen punk, buy CU or it's the iso cubes for you!"


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Sid — most foul-mouthed of the new wave strip heroes.

to detail and tried to recreate the feel of the old Eagle strip. Let's hope that with the advent of 16 bit machines we'll see a little bit more effort.

It's not all one way with computers though, whilst software houses dive in to sign up anything — even *Oink!* — there is a bit or reciprocity. *Shatter* is the first computer generated comic. The confused story of an ex-cop with an RNA enhanced brain, *Shatter* is created on an Apple Mac and set on a Laserwriter printer. The only addition is hand-colouring. The artwork is pretty impressive and gives the mag an appeal its script doesn't really have.

Interestingly comics sometimes mirror the tastes of the computerworld. Just as we've had a junkful of martial arts games, so comics have latched onto the genre. Many come from Japan where there is a thriving comics scene. Best of the batch is the beautifully illustrated *Lone Wolf and Cub*. Drawn in black and white it tells the tale of a man, wrongly outlawed, wandering through feudal Japan with his infant son. Both of them are a bit tasty so there's plenty of rolling heads and lopped off limbs. You might also try *Usagi Yojimbo* which is definitely more easily read than it is pronounced, or *Samurai*, the story of UN agent Toshiru Kimura. And if you're feeling particularly wacky and in the mood for a send-up *Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles* or *Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hampsters* might make good on-the-pan reading.

Another subject currently proving pretty damn popular is Vietnam. With the success of 'Platoon' and 'Full Metal Jacket' in the cinemas comics have cottoned on to the fact that good ol' war is still a mega earner. The choice is varied and typically runs the gamut of war-is-hell, Vietnam-was-a-mistake, liberal conscience moralising, and the-gooks-got-what-they-deserved it-was-a-dirty-job-but-we-had-to-do-it gunghoism. *Nam* falls into the former bracket with young GI's being shocked and brutalised whilst innocent Vietnamese women and chidren get napalmed out of existence. Don't go confusing it with *In Country 'Nam* from Apple which is absolutely entrenched in the latter camp. For a totally right-on read though you'll have to track down *Real War Stories* which includes work from the ubiquitous comic king Alan Moore.

War of course, has been the staple diet of boys comics for years. *Eagle, Victor, Hotspur* and *Wizzard* served up a story after story based on the Allies kicking seven bells out of the Nazis in WWII. Now war stories have modernised along with the equipment. Sam missiles have replaced Sten guns, a quick look at something like *Scout* will demonstrate that. It's not all balls of boiling flame and incoming superhueys, though. For a superior read you should lay your hands on *Charley's War*, a strip which first appeared in *Battle and Action* before the Action Force marketing strips made the comic unreadable. *Charley's War* has now been reprinted in book form and tells the story of a young working class lad who joins up in a fit of patriotism and learns the real truth of trench warfare. It's well-researched, devoid of slop and rivetting. Read it.

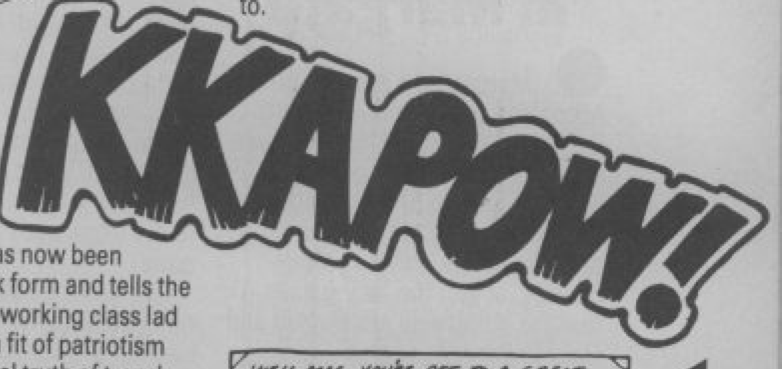
If you're not a regular buyer of comics, it's difficult to know where to start with single issues. The answer is don't, reprinted strips in collected form are the best way. The graphic novel, a form well developed in other countries like France and Japan where there are thousands, is making comics more acceptable. Many of the strips I have already mentioned have been collected together and can be bought for about a fiver. This includes dozens of 2000AD strips, reprinted through Titan, two volumes of *The Swamp Thing* and Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* series.

The graphic novel is now becoming widely regarded, so much so that a story like Art Spiegelmann's *Maus* which tells of the Nazi pogram for the Jews by depicting the Germans as cats and the Jews as mice. It works and is affecting and poignant without being sentimental.

Brit comics have rediscovered their taste for toilet humour too. Smelliest and most obnoxious of all is the wonderfully vile Viz with its classic characters Johnny Fartpants and Sid the Sexist. Oink! takes some beating for piggery and even Bash St Kids creator Leo Baxendale has chipped in with his own book. Thrrp! — the sound of a raspberry being blown.

I couldn't finish, without mentioning Alan Moore again. His recent series *The Watchmen* has just been collected together. If you're a fan of his approach to superheroes it's a must as they turn from crusaders into arms of repression and conversely to hunted men. Don't miss out too on the fab and groovey *Love and Rockets*, oh and *Mister X* from the hugely talented Hernandez brothers.

So there, comics are hip, are stimulating and deserve our attention. I've only scratched the surface here and space limitation means omissions. But you don't need me. Put your underpants over your trousers and go and find a specialist comics shop in your area. I bet you spend more than you mean to.



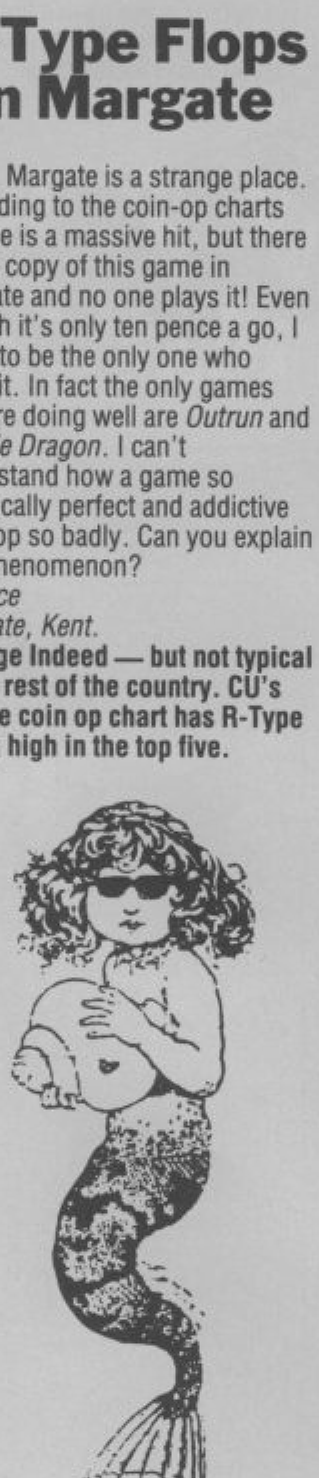


Love and Rockets— hippest of the newies.

LETTERS

R-Type Flops in Margate

Margate is a strange place. According to the coin-op charts R-Type is a massive hit, but there is one copy of this game in Margate and no one plays it! Even though it's only ten pence a go, I seem to be the only one who plays it. In fact the only games that are doing well are *Outrun* and *Double Dragon*. I can't understand how a game so technically perfect and addictive can flop so badly. Can you explain this phenomenon?
J Boyce
Margate, Kent.
Strange Indeed — but not typical of the rest of the country. CU's unique coin op chart has R-Type riding high in the top five.



No Mail?

On August the 26th I rushed out to my local newsagent and bought this month's Commodore User. When I got home I could hardly wait to open it and read your letters page (which is fab), but when I turned to it's usual spot (page 4/5) it was gone!

Did no one bother to write, or had you stopped printing this fab section of your mag? Both these thoughts went through my mind as I searched the mag in PANIC! Calm down, I said to myself. All I had to do was look at the contents, or had they been given the chop too? NO! They were still there (phew).

I looked down the list and there it was in big blue capital LETTERS (get it?) — quickly I turned to page 93 and settled down to read all four glorious pages.
J Sharp
Suffolk
Yes, we moved 'em — but for a good reason. To bring the game reviews nearer the front — so that when browsing through you could find the review you were looking for far easier. Is that OK with everybody? I mean, let me know if it's not. I sometimes wonder who is editing this mag, me, or you.

Paranoia

I am a Norwegian owner of a C128 and a 1571 diskdrive, and now I'm really furious! It's about that great game *The Last Ninja*. This game, in its original version on disk, is so heavily protected to prevent piracy it hardly loads at all! And if it does, I can never be certain that it will load the next level. I managed to get to the second level once, I even managed to recross the swamp and collect the Ninja Magic a second time, when I lost it on my way to the gate to the Palace Gardens. But when I got past the dragon — well, that was it! The drive gave a hammering noise, and then it just kept on humming happily, showing me a black screen. This happens almost every time I play the game, and it is, to say the least, quite annoying. I paid NKR 265 (*as much as that — Ed*) for that game! And this is not the worst. After I bought this disk and fed it to my drive with the before-mentioned results I experienced serious difficuties in loading other programs as well. Not to mention all the read-errors I get in my WP-files (*Nasty — Ed*) and my self-produced basic — and MC-files! All due to the drive's mis-alignment, caused by the PARA-PROTECTED PARANOIDS in System 3 Software! I wonder if they will replace my drive for a new one? In the manual Mark Cale & Tim Best tell me they've created this game for me, but I feel they've done it to help the hardware industry and/or the repair-stores!?
PS. I bet you'll not print this letter, 'cause I haven't at all mentioned how fab I think your mag is, or how I'm looking forward to your letter-section, your great Play To Win pages, Tommy's Tips and all the great articles, not to mention Into The Valley. This is an angry letter, written in despair and with a hope of System 3 Software responding to it. Or at least giving some reaction.
Johan, E Sars
Huldrevin.
Any reaction System 3?

Blue Boy

I am writing to complain about the article in the October issue about Chelsea F.C. and Commodore, their sponsors.

I am a Chelsea Fan and I am deeply offended to read such careless and unnecessary garbage, particularly the sentence that says Kerry Dixon could be worried about the money from the sponsorship replacing him with another striker due to his lack of goods so far this season.

May I point out that he has scored six times already and that Chelsea are third in the First Division as I write.

So no more of these unintelligent comments please.
Howard Irving
Bromley, Kent
OK, I'll tell you the honest truth. I was just sore at Commodore for not pumping the 'big mill' into Bristol City. Sorry Kerry, sorry Chelsea, I sincerely hope you beat Clive Allen to the top goal scorer award. — Ed

LETTER

An Alien writes

I had to write about something that upsets me a lot. You know America's always beating up the Russians in films? Well your computer games are doing the same thing to us — "The Aliens"! You're always killing is in all your games and feeling happy about it when we give up. I'm also writing because When I went to the sweetshop I got my "*plaga*" (mags to you) and while eating my Mars bar (sorry!) I noticed loads of pokes to stop us aliens from killing you and beating us easily, that is disgusting! . . . You've got to give us a chance. But I do love playing *Human Invaders* at the local arcade (sorry). So come on, more pokes for us up here. Did *you* know how far your *plaga* reaches? Anyway I've got to go now, mum's just cooked the tea — I think it's Jet Set Willy Soup. So BYE!!!
Beam me up mum!
P.S. Don't call me weird at the end.
Ejker
London
Sorreee . . . You're definitely weird!

Bill Scolded

I am writing to inform you that "Bill Scolding" (aptly named) should be sacked for his drivel-ridden excuse for reviews.

I am of course talking about *Deceptor.*

I have not been reading C.U. for long so I don't know whether or not his other reviews are any good but going from the before-mentioned I think that he must have the mental capabilities of a retarded earthworm. The game is excellent and you only need to go back to 63 on the tape counter when you die. The walls are plain to add to the feel of the game. The "aliens" are very well animated. And as for calling the dragon a pixel abomination, I can only assume that 'he' (it, cretin features or anything else you want to call him) can't be out of his nappies yet!

In the practice mode you are only supposed to do one level, there isn't any more. And on the real game you have to give it a chance to start loading

Adrian Clover.

So you didn't agree with Bill's review then?

Scores Scorn

How do you score your games? I mean what score has a game got to get before it get's a Screen Star (or a superstar)? Because some game's have the same mark's as a Screen Star but are not one. If you did it into 100 instead of 0 to 10, it wouldn't be as confusing, like 85 or over for a Screen Star, and 95 or over for a superstar.

ZZap 64 is a very good magazine, and so is CU so I don't see why they don't team up, like you could have Julian Rignall reviewing a couple of game's in CU, and Eugene doing a couple in ZZap. there could be a CU vs ZZap challenge, a joined pokes section so reader's of CU would get all ZZap's poke's and vice versa. Or do you detest ZZap and shudder at the very thought of it, and chuck this straight in the bin? P,S, I wrote the same letter to ZZap to see if any one prints it.

Ian Walker
Leicester.

For the last time — marks out of ten is a simpler, clearer, and a universally accepted marking system. Percentages are for your maths teacher. You won't be seeing Julian Rignall writing for CU but we are very pleased to have Gary Penn join our review team. Check out his review of *International Karate Plus* — our first CU Superstar for several months. What makes it a Super Star. Simple, its now the best beat 'em up you can get

Compilations

I'm so annoyed that new software is released at full price and then a few months later appears on a compilation. For example, Elite brought out *Scooby Doo* just before Christmas and then two months later, it appeared on the *Six Pack* tape.

Compilations are all very well if you haven't got the games but I feel sorry for the people who bought it first time round. If they had waited two months they could have got it plus five other games for the price of one. Three other games were on the *Six Pack* which had been quite new (*Split Personality, 1942 Antiriad*).

Compilations like *Yaks Progress* are all right because they are old games. But putting games like *Scooby Doo* on a compilation is silly.

Surely compilations can only damage the software industry. So why don't software houses wait about a year before releasing what might just have become my favourites

Scott Trenchard
Colemore
Hants

Compilations have been around a long time now and they don't seem to have damaged the business that much. Check your software shop over the next few weeks — you'll still see stacks of new games coming out. And don't forget that for someone who has only just bought a computer compilations provide a good way of building up a games library quickish 'n' cheapish.

Kiwi Tips

I have read many computing magazines including ZZap 64 Commodore Computing International, Computer and Video Games and of course CU: Though they all have excellent reviews, news, games, etc etc etc, one thing (with the exception of C&VG) that most of them lack is a good international contacts page for Commodore Users. Why not organise one? Push your advertising crew just a little further and get that extra space!!

Also instead of having the odd peek or poke for games, ask your subscribers to submit their own programs, there are plenty of people out there dying to show off their talent. I think this would provide the mag's readers with something a little more interesting to do than just blast away at video games. Go ahead!! I feel that these ideas could class up your magazine to the NEXT degree!!!

Kerry Mullon
New Zealand

Feel free to use the classified page for contacts — it's cheaper than ST. Have to say no to readers' progs though Kerry — in a previous survey nine out of ten cats (sorry — readers) said they hated 'em.

Kiwi Writes

I've always liked the letter pages, right from when I first started buying your mag.

It is probably the most varied and amusing page in C.U.

Anyway, as long as I've been reading, I don't think I've ever seen a letter from New Zealand! So I thought I'd be first and write one. My name is T. Wilson, and I live at 40 Wellesley Grove, Tauranga. Your magazines sell out fast. (I now have them reserved every month, as I can't afford $110 for a sub!).

All programs (software) for the C-64 in N.Z. are incredibly expensive (take *Wizball*, for example. £8.95 in England. In N.Z, $59.40! Even counting the exchange rate, it's still about £22!)

Piracy is common over here (no wonder!) although originals are much preferred. (A dealer told me that only about 20-30 originals of one game are sold in NZ — the rest are pirates!)

When choosing what software to buy, C.U. isn't a real help though. Because C.U. arrives here two months late, quiet often I have the game before your mag. arrives, but I find that my opinion agrees with the mark you gave (e.g. *Delta, Wizball*).

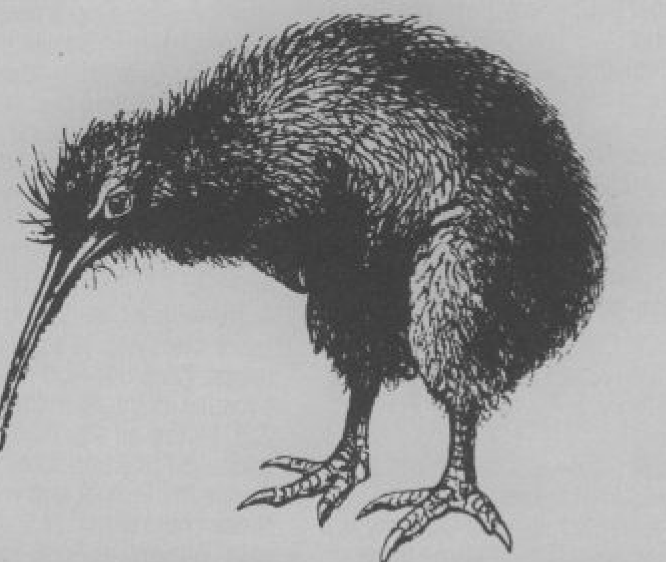
I also congratulate you on your "Arcades" section, well done.

P.S. Thanks to Fred Reid, for putting me onto *The Sentinel*. An excellent game, well reviewed.

A Final plea: -
Is there any chance of competition closing dates being extended so that we can enter?

T. Wilson
New Zealand.

Sorry to hear the games are so dear in NZ. Can't agree with ripping them off for this reason though.



Letters Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

LETTERS

Bugs

I am writing to you because I think you have a strange affinity? (long posh words are not my best feature) for badly bugged games. First there was the *Fist II* fiasco and now your cheapo of the month (June) — *Strike* by Mastertronic.

Your reviewer — Ferdy 'arcade maniac' Hamilton does not even mention that an otherwise good game is very badly bugged.

I saw the review, rushed out and bought it. On my third go (score 378) I was about to throw when balls started whizzing about all over the place, the game paused irreversibly and my player's head came off! Also when in default mode (F1) the game crashed and returned to the Commodore screen.

As I have a 128 I am sure other 128 owners would also like to know that *G.A.C.* (by Incentive) and *War* (by Martech) both do not load on 128.

Finally to Zzap vs. C.U. — both mags are brilliant so stop slagging each other off. I'm sure most people buy both like me.
Dave
Ringwood
Hants

Ferdy Hamilton has been defenestrated, and in future all reviews with his name at the bottom will in fact have been written by a specially-trained ring-tailed lemur.

C*N*S*R*D

Just as a matter of academic interest, in the September issue of CU, why is it that while "F***" earns three letters replaced by asterix "Bastard" none at all?

Also this business of an exposed n*pple. Of course it doesn't sell that much more g*mes but then that's the only reason some ***** in m*rk*ting put it there. So why condone it? Unless of course this is just general editorial p*l*cy. If it's o.k. to show one half of a pair of n*pples, might one ask how much of a ***** one might get?

But then it was only part of some g*me at work wasn't it? And CU is firmly opposed to female explotation.

Besides, anyone who's against the state of affairs in S.A. must be a good bloke, eh Ed? Three ch**rs for your no-n*nsense mag.
All right m*te?
*Mr * Jeal*
*M*tch*m*

Well, monsieur to your questions we would like to assure you that * *** **** Ford Fiesta ** ******* * two goldish and a packet of cheese and onion flavour wotzits**

Hate mail

I want to get a few things off my chest. (A bit like that gal in the Game Over ad — kno' wot I meen, knock it on the 'ead John — as Pete Beale would say whilst teaching Joana Collins how to use a hammer and nail.)

Can I firstly sat that I hate ZZap 64!. I hate people who write in to moan to C.U. (That's Commodore User you know. It's quite trendy to use initials for mags. ZZap 64! isn't trendy because its intials are pathetic; Z.6. I know all about being trendy because I'm a Londoner who drinks Dr. Pepper and wears those checkered jeans. I've even said 'Wicked' or 'Well Bad' occasionally).

I hate pirates and licensed games. (I'm well known for my original and radical ideas). I hate the person who thinks up the titles for the letters (where does he/she get his/her ideas from? Giles Brandreth's 1,001 Unconventional, Conversational (and other long words beginning with 'c') colloquisms maybe?

Just in case I've left somebody out, I'd just like to say 'I hate you' to anyone who knows me or don't wish to know me. Now to the people I hate most of all. (Yes even more than the gits who sell Coke at 70p a can only on hot days, especially if its that Panda crap). They are the programmers of multi-player games because I have no-one to play them with. Now I have to play with myself (oo-er! I hate saying that. Leave it out John. OOhhh, sau-cy That's better.)

P.S. It ya don't print this letter I'll get my mates on to ya.
P.P.S. Is this the most hateful letter you've received?
P.P.P.S My insurance is written in some very small print (0.25mm high) they're the smallest letters I've ever seen and surely beats last month's entries.
P.P.P.P.S. I told my mum to look out for some small letters but she's a little blind and deaf and gave me some brussel sprouts instead. I hate sprouts.
P.P.P.P.P.S. I prefere C.U. to ZZap because you don't advertise your free gifts. Last month's free paper sex was great (Try holding the page in your left ear and stick wet fingers into the plug socket for the ultimate effect). However the month before was even better. When I bought the mag, the newsagent sneezed all over the cover and I just couldn't wait to get home to try it out. It did taste a little sour though. All this and not a penny more unlike inferior mags who try to fool us with a cassette full of all the latest games for another 50p
P.P.P.P.P.P.S. I'm available for cabaret and private parties (especially if they're run by Cynthia Payne).
P.P.P.P.P.P.P.S. Are you P.s.'d off with me now?
Anthony McHugh
Willesden
London

Would you like to swing on a star?
Carry moonbeans home in a jar?
And be better off than you are?
Or would your rather edit C.U.s letter page?



More fizzy Dukes

I disagree with your chart on fizzy drinks. I think they should read,
1) Panda Cola — hopefully extinct soon.
2) One Cal Cola — Gnat's urine.
3) Lilt — runny snot.
4) Cherry anyting — sickly sweet p**s.
5) Dr Pepper — nectar of the sods.
6) 7-Up — what the shuttle couldn't get.
7) Ribena — purple paraquat.
8) Lime Shandy — fizzy dettol.
9) Coke — watered down tar.
10) Irn Bru — made in skotland by disleksics.

P.S. All of these should be fed to Gordon the Gopher to test his stomach capacity.
P.P.S. If Clay Puke fries another hamster I'll set Errol on him. Why not use a Gopher, Randy?
Wilf "Gopher basher"
Scotland

The correspondence on 'Orrible fizzy drinks is now closed.

Letters Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



AMIGA
ST
AMG
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INTO THE VALLEY

C.U. Screen Star



GNOME RANGERS

Level 9
Amiga
64/128
Price:
disk £14.95
Price:
cass £9.95

Ingrid is an over-organising gnome, who has 'accidently' been teleported by a mis-scrolling far away from her native Gnettlefield. It seems the 'accident' was a blessing in disguise for the residents of Gnettlefield.

Thus, Ingrid finds herself outside a shop, and on entering, sees quite a few goodies that would suit her down to the ground. Alas, she has neither cash nor possessions with which to do trade, but manages to strike a bargain with the proprietor, (a centaur would you believe?) to deliver a letter to his aunt, in exchange for one item. Shall she choose a useful-looking shovel, a suit of armour, or a mysteriously promising black rod?

Things start to look suspicious, when Ingrid discovers that the aunt in question is a witch, whose sideline is making and selling concrete garden gnomes. Without a lot of care, Ingrid could become another addition to her collection!

How can she leave the garden with the magic one-way gate? Is the witch's dog likely to provide some sort of help? Perhaps for now she should fail to fulfill her part of the bargain, and do a bit of digging instead, at the end of that beckoning rainbow.

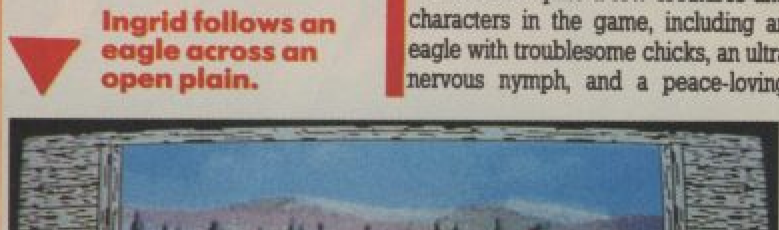
The trouble is, rainbows move as you approach them, and this one seems no different — so how can she find the end, and keep it in one place?

There are quite a few creatures and characters in the game, including an eagle with troublesome chicks, an ultra nervous nymph, and a peace-loving

Lots of goodies in the shop — but have you got the dosh?



Ingrid follows an eagle across an open plain.



BY KEITH CAMPBELL

llama. You need to get some of these on your side, to help you with the tasks.

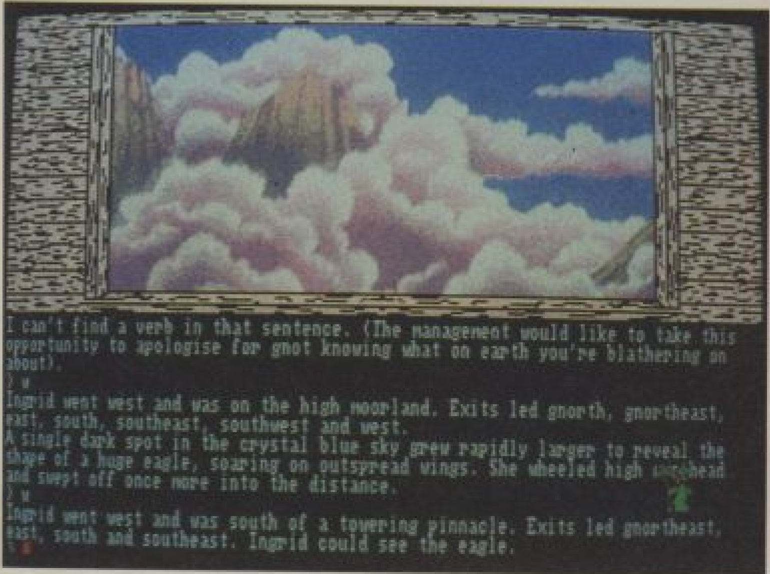
The game comes in three parts, and what I have described are taken from the first part. Further yet! With a Ram Save, and Oops command (multiple on 16 bit machines) there is all the flexibility of play you could want in a complex adventure.

◀ The path opens up for Ingrid — the fleshy gnome.

Play takes on the same mode as in *Knight Orc*, since the game is written using the same new adventure system. This means that the characters will go about their business, but may be persuaded to help you. You can talk to them, follow them, find them, and find any object whose existence you know about, providing it is in a 'gettable' state.



▼ Heavenly clouds billow around the eagles eyrie



But in my opinion, this is a better game than *Knight Orc.* There is not so much hacking and slaying, and the whole thing is gentler, with more ponderable problems. Some of the descriptive text, too, is superb. EXAMINE is a command that should be used whenever possible, for there are few things that don't have a lengthy, and often humorous description to be revealed! My favourite was that of the eagle, with a feast of alliterative F's, ending with a bit about foul fluffy feathery bits under its tail!

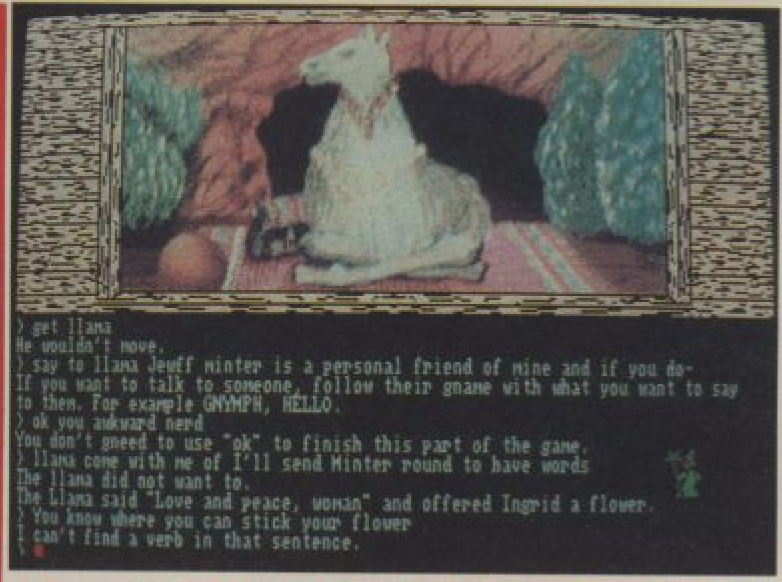
The rest of the text has its funny side too, for with all these GNs around (GNome, GNettlefield) all words beginning with an N in the text, are preceeded with a G. Not only that, the input system accepts the G as an optional start to the words, when used by the player!

Although we have had the revamped *Jewels Of Darkness* and *Silicon Dream* trilogies published by Rainbird over the past year, and the more recent *Knight Orc*, it is nice to see the old firm once more releasing a game on their own label.

Further Level 9 games from Rainbird are on the way, but in the meantime, here you can enjoy a game of similar standard of excellence to *Knight Orc* at a much lower and more realistic price. Apart from the 16-bit versions costing only £14.95, all 8-bit versions will cost a mere £9.95. Since the C-64 cassette version of *Gnome Ranger* has text only, disk owners should make a point of getting the game on disk, since it is exactly the same price as the cassette.

The packaging, too, is new. A flexible plastic double-cassette case in black, with more durable hinges than previous models has been chosen to house the game, which will come complete with a 48 page 12,000 word copy of The Gnettlefield Journal.

Welcome back, Level 9!



▲ A Minteresque touch as a Llama turns up in a cave — gives you a flower too, he does.



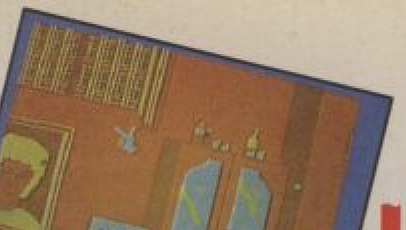
▲ Funny looking mushrooms — definitely a game for hippies.

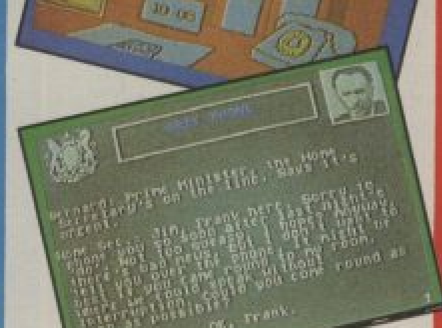
C.U. Screen Star

GRAPHICS 9
PLAYABILITY 9
PUZZLEABILITY 9
OVERALL 9

INTO THE VALLEY

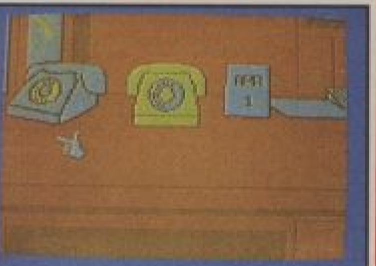
INTO THE VALLEY





The phone rings at exactly 10.08.
It's the PM's old mate — the Chief Commissioner.

Is April the 1st significant?





YES PRIME MINISTER

Price: £14.95/cass £19.95/disk
64/128
Mosaic Publishing/ Oxford Digital Enterprises

What a tiring week I've had; meeting after meeting, far reaching decisions on education, nuclear power, party political broadcasts, and French cheese. And what thanks do I get for it? My popularity has slumped!

I was quite sure I acted decisively, and with high Tory motives in reaching a formula on teachers' pay. Whilst actually cutting it in real terms, my method would have seemed to the electorate to be a far more generous and fairer method of calculating it.

But Sir Humphrey and Bernard threw so many diverse arguments at me, whilst agreeing with absolutely everything I said, that somehow I ended up having to persuade them that I was wrong and they were right, all along!

The trouble with these Civil Service types is that they come up with so many counter arguments for simply everything I propose that isn't what they want to do, that in the end I can't be sure what I have decided, or even if I have made any decisions at all!

I have, of course, been playing the computer version of *Yes, Prime Minister,* and although all the plots and themes running through it are completely new, it as faithful to the TV series as possible.

You play me — Jim Hacker, Prime Minister. The objective of the game is to increase your popularity ratings, which, thankfully, are hidden away in a safe in your office. Play is by answering questions, and choosing from a list of possible policies. These are put to you during phone calls and meetings with Sir Humphrey, Bernard, and other characters, like the Chairman of the CEGB, the Foreign Secretary, and the Irish Prime Minister. You get a different combination of plots and dilemmas each time you play, which has the advantage of offering something new at the same time as giving you a chance to try a different policy on one of the decisions you fluffed.

This is hardly a real adventure, but as a text oriented game, it falls within the ambit of The Valley — and jolly pleased I was too, to get the chance of playing it! In the end it comes down to a multiple choice type game, but it is the way it is implemented, coupled with a style of script virtually undistinguishable from those on TV, that makes the game a must for YPM addicts!

The only 'real' graphic is the representation of the Prime Ministerial Office, which depicts your desk, a couple of phones, an intercom, a blotter, and a telex machine, among other things.

A pointing hand shaped cursor is moved about using either joystick or control keys, to select any of the items mentioned if they are 'live'. So that if the left hand phone starts ringing and flashing, selecting it will open up a text dialogue of the conversation.

To attend a meeting, the door handle is selected, and a choice of destinations is offered. A meeting, again, takes the form of text dialogue.

Beside the one picture, there are some very clever 'non-picture' graphics. When a message comes through on the telex, for example, the paper automatically feeds up the screen, as the type-head bounces along the line, printing out each letter.

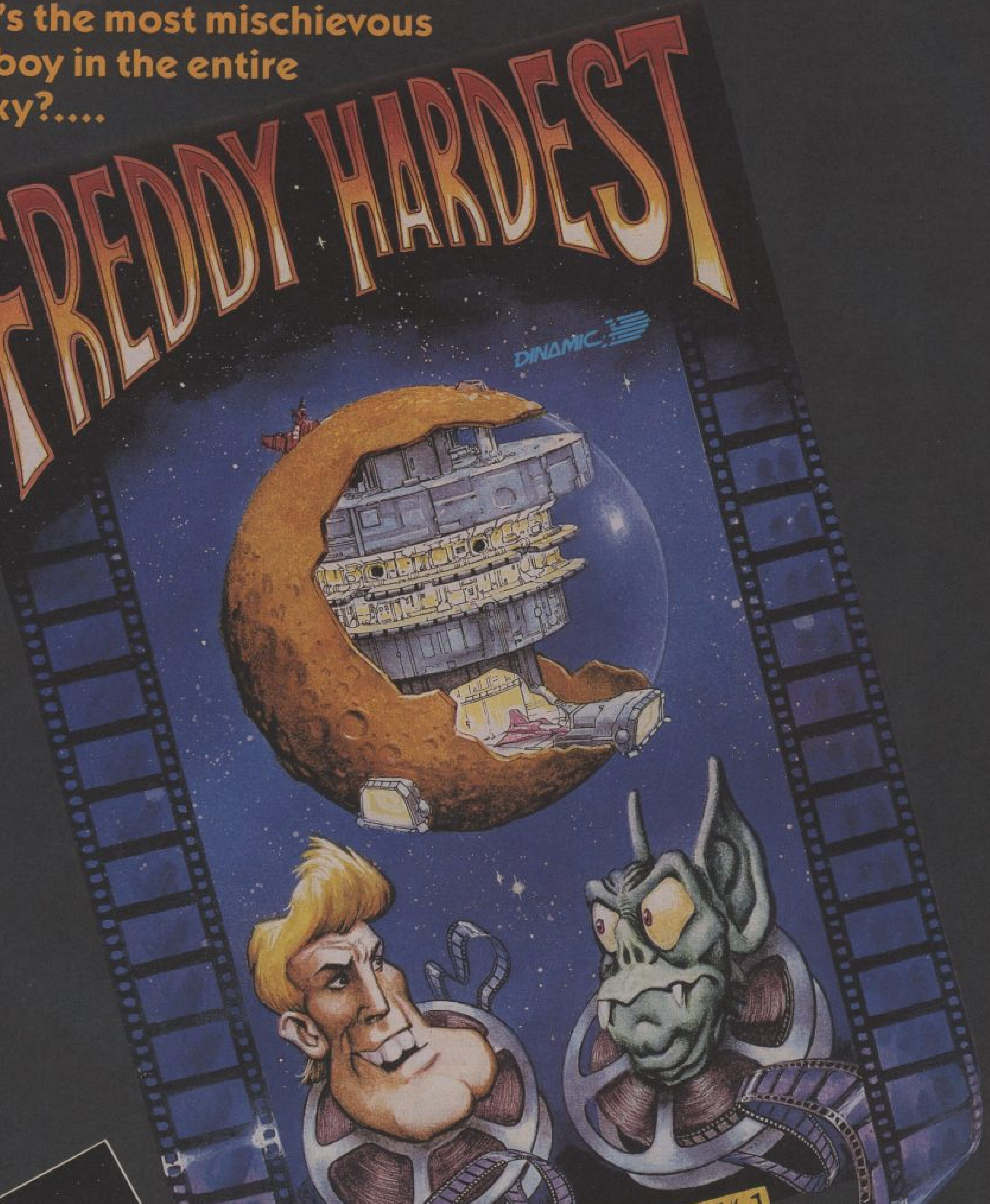
Comparisons are odious, but this game must inevitably be compared with the Mosaic/Level 9 Mole and Archers games. YPM comes out on top by a long way, since it is the variety in the way the dialogues are presented that helps keep up the interest. The only disappinting feature, is the price — a bit over the top for the cassette at £14 odd, I feel.

Graphics	9
Sound	9
Toughness	3
Vocab/parser	7

INTO THE VALLEY



Who's the most mischievous Playboy in the entire galaxy?....





...That's Who!, and don't forget it!

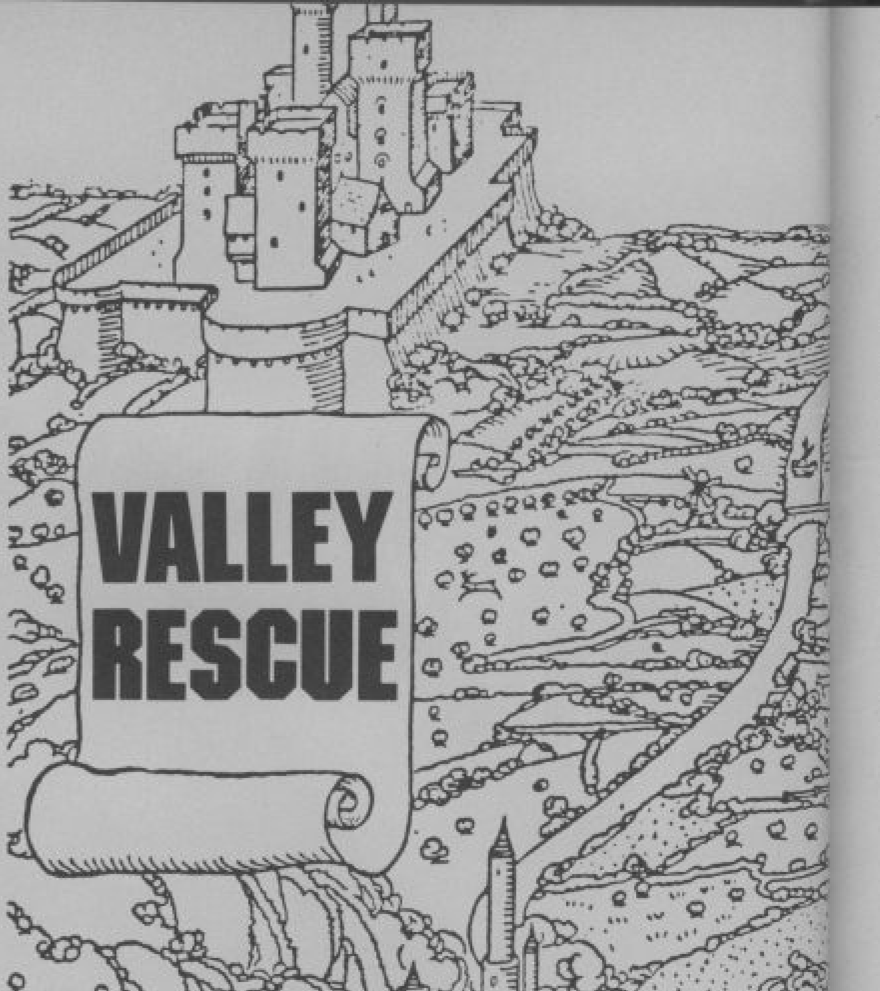
You may not believe it but he's a super-sharp counter espionage agent with a big appetite for entertainment and there's nothing he enjoys more than a full blown bruise-up! Now trouble is heading his way as you help Freddy recover, after yet another crash-landing, to steal a space-craft to freedom. Take on man-eating ants, reptiles, robots, mutants and genetic throw-backs with Dinamic's latest wonderman — Freddy Hardest.

imagine ..the name of the game

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INTO THE VALLEY



VALLEY RESCUE

Few things spread greater panic and despair in The Valley, than the mention of an adventure that I've never heard of. And panic is rife this month!

"Does anyone on this planet know of an adventure game called *Magic Stone* by Audiogenic" asks David Lumb of Castleford. We here certainly haven't come across it, so is there anyone out there who has? And if so, can they tell David how to move the shutter that comes down in the dungeon when he kills the snake? And what number should he try in the room with straw? HELP tells him to try a number. and "1639 doesn't work, " says David. Now I'm really lost! Should it?

Who was heard of *The Lost City*, or *The Scroll Of Akbar* Khan, by Step One Software? Again I have to admit to never having heard of either game, nor the company producing them. Perhaps the latter admission is forgivable, for according to F.Richardson of Pfungstadt in West Germany, he has written to Step One in Hertfordshire for help, but it seems they have gone out of business.

Keith Berry of Fleetwood is having 'a considerable amount of trouble'. He can't get out of the dead marshes in *Shadows Of Mordor*. He's built a raft, lit a fire, found a swamp, and reached some quicksand. 'The bleedin' raft won't shift' says Keith, 'I've nothing to cook on the fire' he complains, and to top it all, he keeps drowning in the quicksand.

These Mordor rafts are certainly devilish things to shift! Mark Jackson, too, is trapped at the bottom of the self same cliff, also with a D-I-Y raft. "Please help me!" he cries. The problem now becomes simple! There's two of you down there — so get together and give each other a hand dragging the rafts away! There — don't ever say The Valley doesn't help you with your adventure problems!

Are Mr. Broadwater and his son being particularly thick? That is the question contained in a desperate plea for help with *Ring Of Power*, one of the "most primitive, antique games, yet it has us foxed!" says Mr. Broadwater. They were delighted to see the game mentioned in the August Valley, for they had begun to think that theirs was the only copy ever made! The problem seems to be the cliff. Not another cliff!? Yes — they claim to have been staring at the bottom of it for about three years, now, and are still unable to get to the top.

You haven't bumped into Mark Jackson and Keith Berry dragging a couple of rafts; I suppose, Mr. Broadwater? Uh — wrong game! What the Broadwaters seem to be lacking, apart from a leg-up, is a meeting with a pirate and a giant. Help them someone — please!

Jason Jennings of Solihull, is desperately searching for the kidnapped Twolower, in *Colour Of Magic*. Can anyone locate him, so that Jason can go to his rescue?

Dave Wilbraham and Mick Benson reckon that they're nearly at the end of Labyrinth. But they are stuck in a room whose walls are covered with piano keys. Who's sharp enough to help them out?

I was under the impression that the castle door in Quest For The Holy Grail, could be kept open simply by dropping the wedge. However, it seems I was wrong, for Peter Spratt of Winchester keeps finding himself locked in, despite dropping the wedge. Who can tell us where he is going wrong?

David Enright thinks The Valley is 'great', and asks if his *Frankenstein* problems can be dealt with in Valley Rescue. Your prayer is answered, David. But next time, if you include your address when you write, we'll get back to you by post — it's a lot quicker than waiting for the information to get into this magazine!

Another reader who is shy about his address, is Gonzalo Wood of Oxford. Gonzalo has been having a bit of trouble with bees. We're having trouble in sending him the *Hulk* answer, so look in the clues section, Gonzales.

Les Brady of Hull, is staring at an ornate door in part 3 of *Neverending Story*, unable to open it. Go on — tell him, someone!

Don't forget — if you have an adventure problem, write to me at the Valley, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. We'll do our best to get back to you with the answer.

ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2	1	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
3	2	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD
4	4	STAR WRECK	ALTERNATIVE
5	RE	ALTER EGO	ACTIVISION
6	3	SHADOWS OF MURDER	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7	NE	LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	9	FRANKENSTEIN	CRL
9	7	SYDNEY AFFAIR	INFOGRAMES
10	RE	PAWN	RAINBIRD

FRANKENSTEIN:
Jump from the dead pine when the bear is eight feet away.
KAYLETH:
To see your way through, go east after a bout of physem sickness.
HULK:
Wave the fan at the bees!
SPACE QUEST:
Cross the bridge and pass through the broken arch!
ZORK 2:
The lizard door must be opened before the menhir can be moved.
GUILD OF THIEVES:
If you can't watch where you're going, package your load carefully!
BUREACURACY:
Destroy your meal by reclining it!

NEWS

Hold-up at Rainbird

The new Magnetic Scrolls adventure will take gamers back to the land of Aquitania — made famous in the company's first and award winning game — *The Pawn*

Jinxter tells of a land once protected by a magic charm bracelet which ensured that everyone in the land would enjoy continous good luck, there would be no accidents, and a state of continuous happiness would rest over the land. It was not to last though.

The Green Witches grew powerful and the seven chains of the protective charm bracelet were lost.

Enter you accompanied by your cockney guardian who mixes some useful suggestions with barrow boy charm and wisecracks.

Scrolls are promising stacks of funnies in *Jinxter* and even better graphics than on their other titles.

Expect to see it in the shops in November at £19.95 on disk for the 64/128 and £24.95 on the Amiga — published by Rainbird.



Chocolate box thatched cottage in Jinxter's land of Aquitania.

Trainspotters will love this once — there goes the Aquitania express.



Arcade Adventures from the Masters

Level 9 will shortly be making a start on a series of arcade adventures. But arcade adventures have come a long way since their original maze approach.

The company revealed that plans are afoot for an arcade adventure with many more real puzzles in, plus role playing elements, together with a large screen area in which the player's character can move and interact.

INTO THE VALLEY

How did they end

The summer saw the release of three big games from Infocom: *Bureaucracy, Stationfall*, and *The Lurking Horror*. The Valley's reviews were written at about half-way through each game – there simply wasn't time to solve any completely. So how did they shape up in the end?

STATIONFALL





I went out on a limb with *Stationfall*, and proclaimed it the best adventure I had ever played.

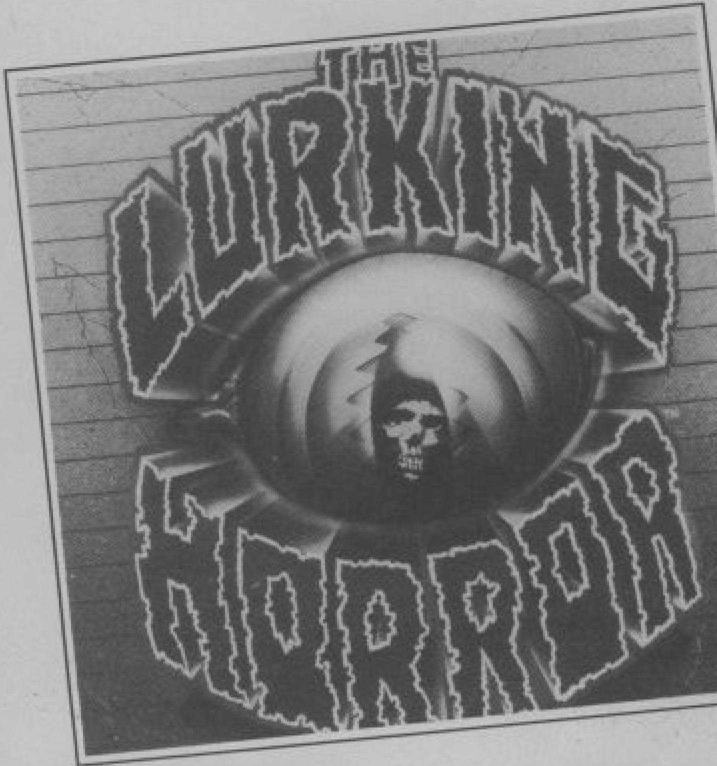
The review was written when I had about 50 of the 80 points available. I knew what I was searching for, and suspected what I needed to do to reach the source of the trouble aboard the space station. My approach turned out to have been correct – it was solving a couple of the intermediate puzzles that got me stuck.

I failed to exploit the Arcturian balloon creature (a simple method which I ever-so-nearly managed). But even when I got him moving, I still hadn't come near to discovering his use – even though there was a problem staring me in the fact, just waiting for him! Both he and the ostrich were outrageous Steve Meretskyisms of the best vintage.

The ending of *Stationfall* is quite dramatic – a bit of a tear-jerker in fact, with just the right mixture of sadness tinged with hope.

Overall, when complete, the game had lived up to its expectations, albeit slightly less complex that it appeared at first. Slight disappointments linger over some major red herrings behind which, I had been convinced, lay crucial objects and clues.

THE LURKING HORROR



This slimey, tentacle-draped game from Dave Lebling in the vein of H.P.Lovecraft, didn't do a lot for me at the start. Set on a college campus at night, during an inpenetrable blizzard, whilst the Lebling brand of puzzles kept me satisfied for hours, the drama of the horror had less impact than the sci-fi drama of Stationfall. But that is very much a matter of personal preference.

I left the game at a rather open part in the plot, having failed completely to notice a mentioned exit past which I had travelled numerous times. I can only suppose that the first time around I had been so intent on the danger currently faced, that I missed the exit text, and thereafter glossed over it, even though never playing in anything but verbose mode.

So I had not managed to pass through the arch in the Alchemy laboratory, and could thus not have reached the setting for the finale, for on that rested getting something from the urchin. How are you to tell, then, that the urchin hides a tool that can cut in a similar way to the axe, yet the axe cannot cope with? And if you don't know it exists, how can y ou be expected to work out how to get it? Again, trial and error, with a degree of luck.

Still, it cannot be said that *The Lurking Horror* ends tamely! It is all good edge-of-the-seat stuff, with a couple of SAVEs necessary towards the end, to get it exactly right!

BUREAUCRACY



Bureaucracy is the title of a game nominally written by Hitch Hikers Guide author Douglas Adams. His text was far too verbose to fit into a game, and word had it that the game-play was somewhat lacking, too. So Infocom drafted in Michael Bywater, an English author, to help them mould the draft into something playable. Michael worked with the team of Infocom storytellers, who each contributed some puzzles of their own, until the adventure was viable. Even so, it would only fit into 128K machines!

In hindsight, *Bureaucracy* comes out as the weakest of the three adventures, despite its higher price of £34.99. The opening sequences in the player's own street are without doubt the best part of the game. Here the player, frustrated by the incompetence of his bank, and the failure of his own removal firm, has to unscramble the misdelivered mail in the road, in a desperate attempt to get hold of enough cash to take him to the airport.

He then has to battle with the airline, dispose of a Zalagasan in-flight meal, and escape the plane which is destined to crash. It was at this point where the review left off. What happens next tends to be pure fantasy, rather than a fantastic treatment of real situations, and it soon becomes apparent that from the moment of entering the cab to the airport, the adventure has become extremely linear.

By linear I mean that the player moves from one very restricted set of locations and puzzles to another – and once he's moved on, there's no going back. Thus, if a crucial object has been left behind, it's a matter of going back to a saved version, or, quite possibly and more frustratingly, restarting the whole game from scratch.

Towards the end of the game, the puzzles themselves continue to maintain the high Infocom standard, although there is a rather unfair puzzle involving logging on to a computer with the correct ID and password, which is difficult to actually solve even when, essentially, you know the answer.

But it is the ending which really lets the game down. After the verbose and leisurely start, once through the game, you are abruptly returned to your house with all your personal difficulties sorted out – and that's it! You never do reach Paris, which, I would have thought, would have been good for at least a couple more puzzles and laughs, as well as giving the player the satisfaction of reaching the goal he was set at the outset.

Comparison

So here is a brand new comparative rating system. Taking the three games and comparing them with each other only, here they are ranked in order of merit (irrespective of relative cost):

So if you have to choose between them, forget *Bureaucracy* and go for *Stationfall* or *Lurking Horror*. Both are cracking good adventures, and it is the subject matter that appeals to you most that should govern your choice. I'd still plump for Stationfall, but I certainly got a great deal of entertainment from The Lurking Horror.

	PLOT	PUZZLES	STRUCTURE	ENDING
Bureaucracy	3	3	3	3
Stationfall	1	2	1	2
Lurking Horror	2	1	2	1

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- Freeze the action then view the program with the monitor feature. Add pokes for infinite lives etc. Then restart the game or backup – ideal for customised versions of your games.
- Picture Save. Save any multi-colour. Hires screen to disk or tape. Compatible with Blazing Paddles, Koala, Slideshow etc.
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- For C64, 64C, 128, 128D (in 64 mode).
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- Compatible with fast DOS and Turbo ROM systems.
- Backup process in turbo speed – faster than any rivals.
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Compare these (accurate!) figures for some rival backup systems:

SYSTEM	LOAD TIME	PROGRAMS PER DISK	CARTRIDGE REQUIRED?
ACTION REPLAY MK III SAVED WITH NORMAL TURBO	25 SECS	THREE	NO
ACTION REPLAY MK III SAVED WITH WARP*25	9.8 SECS	THREE	NO
FREEZE FRAME (MK IV)	40 SECS	TWO OR THREE	NO
FREEZE FRAME (LAZER)	25 SECS	TWO	YES
EXPERT SYSTEM	30 SECS	THREE	NO

All purchasers of Action Replay III will receive WARP*25 FREE with their cartridge. Existing Action Replay III owners can obtain WARP*25 Disk turbo by sending £2.50. post free. (No need to send your cartridge). OR obtain it FREE on the Enhancement Disk (£7.95).

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PRICE £7.95 with FREE! Multicolour Slideshow for display of loading screens, hires pictures etc. saved by Action Replay. Great entertainment!

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100% Success? Rival Claims? Who's Kidding Who?
Action Replay Mk III will backup any program which any other cartridge can backup – and more! It also has an unmatchable range of features. Consider 'Freeze-Frame' for example, which uses more disk space, saves at slower speed, has slower tape loader, has no built in disk fastloader, no picture, Sprite or restart features and costs £10 more than Action Replay. So who's kidding who? Buy Action Replay Mk III. If you find that it does not live up to our claims return it within 7 days of receipt and your money will be refunded.

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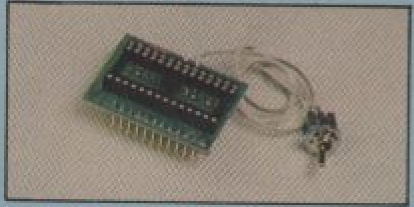
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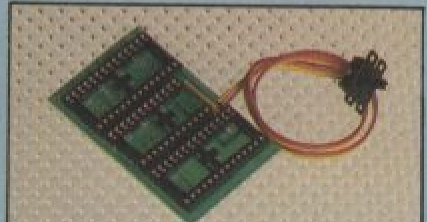




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- What gives Burst Nibbler its power? Conventional nibblers have to decode the data from the disk before it can transfer it using the serial bus — when non standard data is encountered they are beat. Burst Nibbler transfers data as raw GCR code via the parallel cable without the need to decode it so you get a perfect copy of the original.

- ● Will nibble upto 41 tracks. ● Copy a whole disk in under 2 minutes. ● Full instructions.
- ● Regular updates — we always ship the latest. ● Fitted in minutes — no soldering usually required.
- ● Full or ½ tracks. ● No need to buy parallel cable if you have Disk Demon/Dolphin etc.
- ● Cable has throughbus extension for other add ons.

- Whether to choose FastHack'em or Burst Nibbler? Fast Hack'Em is unbeatable value as an "all-rounder" — with nibblers, 1 or 2 drive copy, format, file copy, 1571 copy etc. etc., so if you have a more general requirement perhaps FastHack'Em is for you. Burst Nibbler is a pure nibbler second to none, for the reasons stated. So if it's just making backups you are interested in, there is no other product to beat it.

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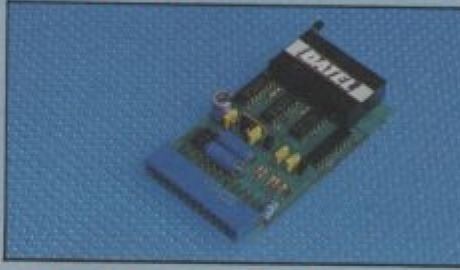
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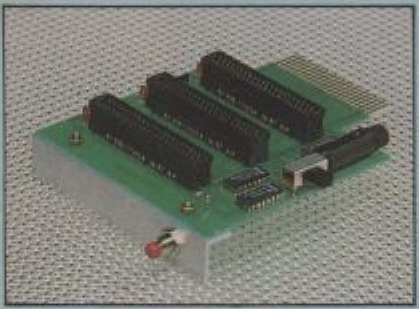


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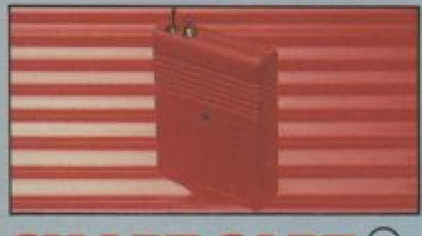
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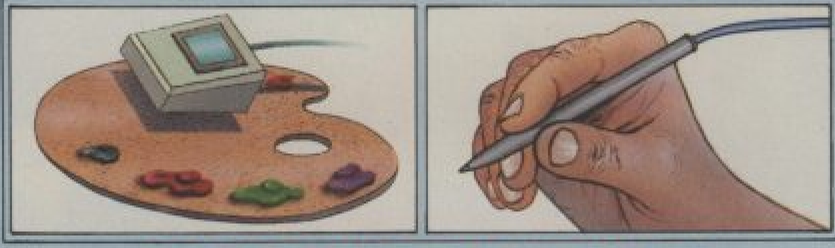


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Turbo Rom II is a replacement for the actual kernal inside your 64. It provides superfast load/save routines.

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- ❑ FLOAD – special I/O loader.
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Blazing Paddles available separately for **£12.99**

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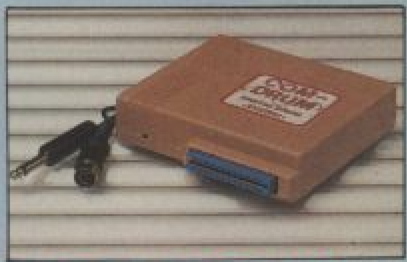
- ❑ Robotek 64 is a comprehensive hardware/software package which enables you to connect your 64/128 to the outside world.
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- ❑ Voice input for voice control.
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- ❑ Excellent value! **ONLY £39.99**

including hardware/software/mic etc. (State tape or disk)



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- ❑ Now you can turn your computer into a digital drum system. ❑ Hardware/software package.
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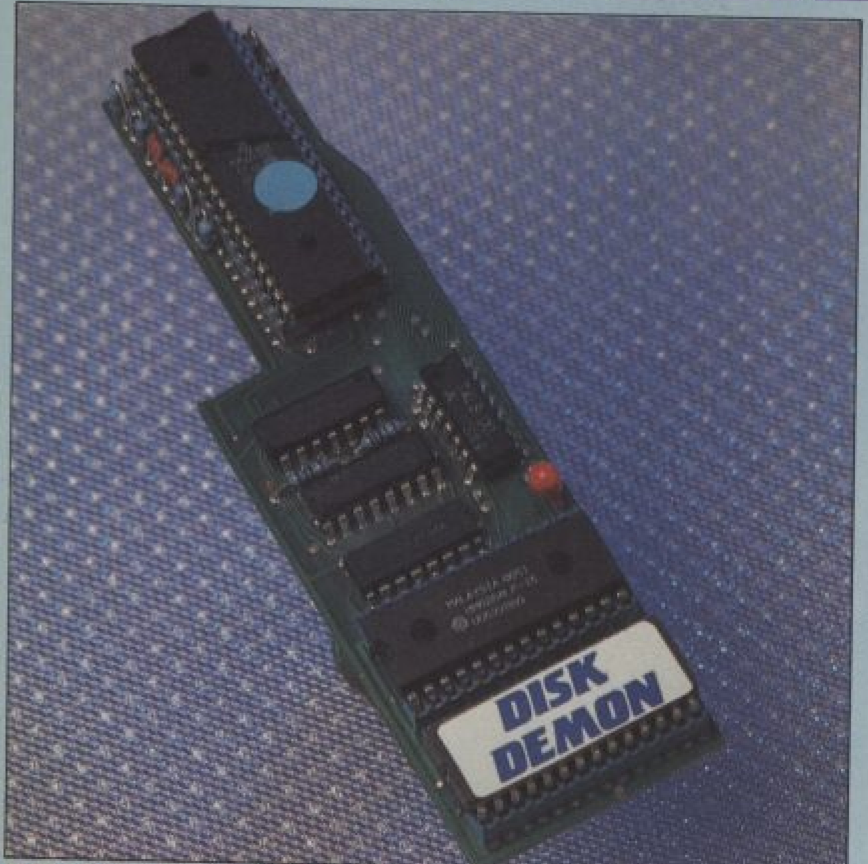
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C128 version £69.99

FAST HACK'EM ™

The Ultimate Disk Copier/Nibbler for C64/128

❑ MULTI-MODULE SYSTEM – ALL ON ONE DISK

❑ SINGLE 1541 MODULE

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- ● FILE COPY: Copy and file in 9 seconds.
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- ● FAST COPY: Entire 1571 disk in under 1 minute.
- ● SINGLE OR BOTH SIDES: Will copy C64 or true 128 software.
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❑ 1541 PARAMETERS MODULE

This is the module that gives Fast Hack'em its power. The parameters module contains dozens of "Parameter Keys" that are used to unlock those heavily protected programs. Each parameter is designed for a particular software brand or even a particular program. Other copy programs may make strong claims, but without special parameters they just can't cope. Datel will be offering updates to Fast Hack'em on a quarterly basis, featuring 20-50 new parameters plus other improvements as they're made. Prices to be £6 plus old disk.

❑ 1541 PARAMETERS MODULE

- ● AUTO NIBBLER: Copy an entire unprotected disk in under 1 minute. Features auto track/sector analyzer.
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DISKMATE II

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- ❑ Plus a full machine code monitor – too many features to list but it has them all!
- ❑ Special switching techniques make Diskmate invisible to the system. Therefore it is a more compatible fastloader than other types.
- ❑ Diskmate II is £14.99.

Special Offer!!

Diskmate II can be purchased on the same cartridge as Action Replay III for **ONLY £39.99**



MIDI 64

A Full Midi Interface for the 64/128 at a realistic price

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- ❑ Compatible with most leading software packages including: Seil, JMS, Advanced Music System, Joreth, Steinburg etc.

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ARCADES

What or who the hell is *Wardner*? It's hard enough to read the title on the screen, but don't be put off it, because *Wardner* is a cute, if unoriginal, game.

It turns out that *Wardner* is *Mr Wardner*, a pretty nasty old man, who goes in for stealing people's daughters. Your own daughter is whisked away from you by an evil hooded figure as you walk along, turned into a jewel and presented to the old man. Determined to bring her back you set out on the perilous journey to his castle.

Wardner turns out to be pure *Ghosts and Goblins* with you controlling a cutsie Wonderboy-type figure. You can even get a little blue cloak which will protect you in the same way as the armour in the Capcom game.

There are four levels of beastly land to negotiate to reach his lair. You begin in the woods where you'll have to use the creepers that hang down to negotiate bogs and swamps. Horrible ghouls and goblins descend on you with alarming regularity and the little ball of fire you can throw turns them into treasure and jewels for bonuses.

Completing each level allows you to spend the money you've collected in a homely little shop which sells useful goods like a clock for extra time, new weapons and needle and thread for repairs to the protective cloak. "Shop wisely", says the owner. But first you have to get the key.

Stage two takes you into an old building where you have to make your way up and round a series of platforms.



▲ A hot welcome from Mr Wardner.

WARDNER

Taito (2 × 10p)



▲ Led astray.



▲ Come down, you cad!



◀ Oo-er - time for a spot of shopping



▼ How do we get out of this?



▼ Easy — just hitch a lift.



▼ What's tall, green and wreathed in flames?

Conveyor belts make progress difficult, but not half as difficult as the wicked whirling blades above your head.

Stage three takes you into another sinsister wood with huge, tall trees, so tall you can only see the trunks. Easter island type statues follow, then a lake of fire which spouts geysers of flames into the air.

From here it's a quick shop and then onto the final stage, the strange castle. More platforms and ladders crop up as you progress, plus evil pyramid-like traps, like ramps which drop into beds of spikes. The many corridors have guardians like huge fire-breathing dragons and curious armoured beasts. You'll have plenty of trouble here unless you've found the guardian angel to watch your back.

Finally you'll confront the old man himself who'll fire bolts of fire at you from his staff. Just when you think you've beaten him and he's disappearing, a skeletal figure appears and mutates into an enormous satanic looking beast. *Wardner* has shown his true colours!

Succeed and you'll be transported back to the arcadian land you left with your daughter transformed once more into her small and dumpy self. Fail and you'll never see her again.

Wardner clearly has nothing new to offer, but I can't bring myself to slag it off. Whilst all it does is continue in the levels-ladders-beasts-and-ghouls genre it is well executed. The graphics are very good and the creatures are imaginative. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see it snapped up for home computers — it would make a good conversion.

Mike Pattenden

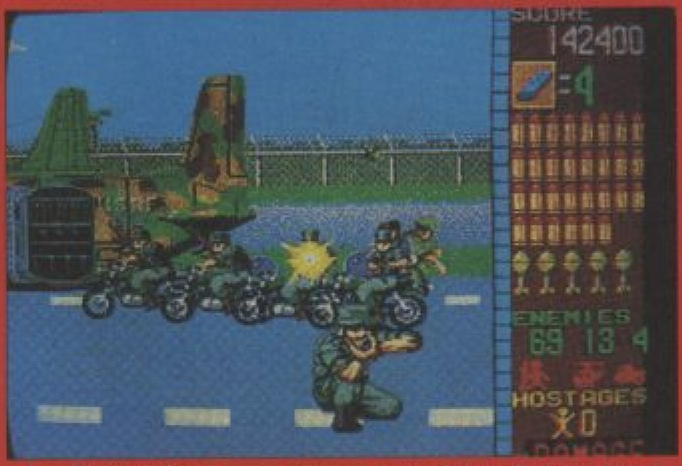
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
TOUGHNESS	8
ENDURANCE:	7
VALUE:	7
OVERALL:	7

ARCA

Next month we've got a massive scoop preview for you in Arcades. All the way from Japan we have news of the new wave of coin-ops for 1988, but just to whet your ammo belt we have a game that's on the point of being launched here. Operation Wolf is set to blow the arcades to pieces. Here's a first review all the way from Tokyo. Tora, tora, tora!



▲ The communications camp and they're on to you.



▲ Motorbike troops swarm over the airfield to block your escape.

OPERATION WOLF



TAITO
3 × 10

Forget *Afterburner*. I have just played the game of the year and much of next year too, but in the wake of Hungerford I can forsee a few tabloid scandal stories approaching. COMPUTER GAME RAMBO HORROR headlines loom, because tasteful or subtle *Operation Wolf* ain't. Not that Taito should worry because *OW* can take of itself.

What you'll see when you eventually find one of these games is a cabinet that is strangely reminiscent of those awful old games where you shot ducks by firing a 'real' gun mounted in front of a screen. This is OW's inspiration, but there's nothing naff about it. Instead of a rather tinny old pop gun you get something which looks like an Uzi sub-machine gun sitting wickedly in front of the screen. Drop your money in the slot and you get a dramatic orchestrated chord. Hit start and an animated sequence of a lone para jumping from a plane into the jungle takes place. Grip the gun tightly 'cos you're on your own in hostile territory.

You have a specific route and a specific task ahead. Rescue those ubiquitous hostages and waste as many of the enemy as possible in the process. Scene one begins at the enemy communications camp. Everything looks quiet as some huts pan past, then suddenly . . . alert! The place is crawling with troops all out to stop you. Before you know it you're blasting away, finger holding the trigger back, raking everything in sight, the gun jumping realistically in your hands. Dadaddadada!. Bodies begin to pile up, windows explode as the bullets rip through them, oil drums puncture realistically as you spray everything and everyone wildly. Phew!

You'll begin to realise that the Rambo approach doesn't work. You don't have unlimited ammo. If you're not careful you'll find yourself squeezing out air instead of lead and then you're in trouble. The hit points you take, shown on a meter at the side of the screen will mount rapidly until the screen starts to fade out, and a voice coldly tells you "Sorry. You have sustained a lethal injury. It's all over for you, soldier.

The veteran's approach will save your money. Pick out your targets carefully and take your finger off the trigger at each brief moment of respite. Then, to top up your ammo, shoot the magazines left dotted around the place. Shoot

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	9
VALUE	9
OVERALL	9

ADES

other objects like coconuts or even the wild animals that occasionally run panic stricken through the mayhem. A hit may reveal other equally useful objects too, like extra shells for the rocket launcher mounted on the front of the gun, a must for heavier artillery, or a fresh energy supply, or medikit. Collecting these at every available opportunity is the key to making it through to the end of *Operation Wolf.*

Shooting your way way to the end of the Communications camp will take you onto the next stage which follows after a brief still of a commando blowing up a radio mast. You're transported into a jungle for another dose of action. This time there are more troops, tanks and now gunboats which cruise up and down the river. Make it to the end and a banana republic generalissimo figure appears holding a female hostage as a shield. Try and blow him away as he dodges around without hitting her.

Frequently during the various stages villagers will run headlong through the action, hitting them costs you points which is another reason for picking your targets carefully. There's a fairly gruesome sense of humour at work here and I found myself snickering manically into the gunsight as I tried to hit a terrified pig and mistakenly shot a bikini clad girl. I worry about me sometimes. My first name is Michael after all.

There are four other scenes including a relatively easy village which if you clear you'll be rewarded with a subtraction of your hit points (symbolized by a nurse patching you up), then it's on to the magazine where padded up, beefy machine gunners and mortarmen try and stop you from replenishing your ammunition. The big test follows as you try and release the hostages from the concentration camp, and then get them away to the airport.

Operation Wolf is a brilliant game and you'll struggle to have only one go on it each time you pass an arcade. There's currently only one in the land (in London's Electrocoin testing sight) but don't worry, soon the country's going to be flooded with them to satisfy itchy trigger fingers everywhere. *Operation Wolf* extremely unsound is probably ideologically but I don't care. Just imagine you're at the Tory party conference or something.

Mike Pattenden



▲ Take the fatty out with a head shot, he's well padded up.



▲ Occasional extra bonus screen — top up ammo and points here.

▼ Completing the village section replenishes your hit points



▼ Sorry you have a sustained a lethal injury. Croak!





ARCADES

This newie from Bally Midway finds you in a space station which has been over run *'Aliens'*-style with little green creaures of various kinds. You play one of three luckless individuals whose task it is to try and rid the place of aliens.

Xenophobe features a fairly novel screen display: it's divided horizontally into three equal sections, one for each of a maximum of three players. You can play it on your tod, of course, in which case only one of these three sections will be relevant.

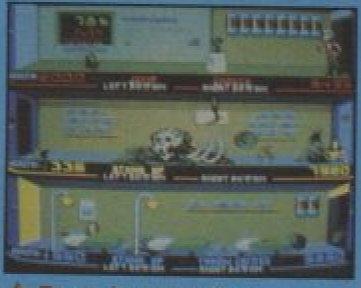
Each screen-section shows a series of inter-connecting rooms through which you, the intrepid alien-hunter, roam, armed — initially — with a rather feeble hand gun. In each room you encounter an alarming array of intergalactic nasties. Snail-like creatures roll at you, little interplanetary hermit crabs scuttle about the place, and the rooms are generally crawling with all manner of ugly beings who wrap themselves around you, knock you over, throw things at you and do just about anything else they can think of to reduce your health and, ultimately, kill you.

The rooms also contain more potent weapons, such as lazer guns and limited numbers of grenades. But beware — careless use of a grenade can lead to you blowing yourself off your feet, and, as in *Double Dragon*, you drop your weapon when you're upended and you may lose even more health trying to regain it by snatching it back from under the noses of the aliens who knocked it from your grasp. However a small friendly R2D2-type supply robot comes trundling about the place from time to time and he may drop another weapon on the floor for you to pick up.

There are also bits of useful "hardware" lying about the place to be picked up for points and later use, but it has to be said that these are



▲ Just the three of you and a shipful of aliens.



▲ Beam down together. . .



▲ . . .then go your separate ways.

XENOPHOBE
BALLY MIDWAY
(2 × 10p)

secondary: the main purpose of *Xenophobe* is to dis them aliens as comprehensivly as you can.

When there's more than one player, the split-screen feature comes into its own. You and your two mates are all on the same ship, y'see, so you all start out in the same room, and the three sections show exactly the same action. But if one of you decides to move out of that room and into another, *his* particular screen-section will scroll, leaving the other two players behind.

As you all move further around the ship, in different directions, the screen display becomes three independent strips of simultaneous game-playing. And each time you cross paths with one of your comrades, your screen-section and his become identical once more.

If the space station becomes irrecoverably infested — and certainly, if you're a lone player, this is a depressingly frequent occurance — you're beamed out, given a brief report on how you did, then transported to another alien-beset vessel.

There's an independent "continue" option for each of the three players, and new players can even "buy in" to a game that's already commenced.

There's no denying that *Xenophobe's* designers have tried something fairly adventurous with this interacting split-screen feature, hitherto only seen by this writer on First Star's 64 hit *Spy Vs Spy*, and if you can dig up a couple of friends you should definitely have at least one razzle on the machine just to see what you think of the effect.

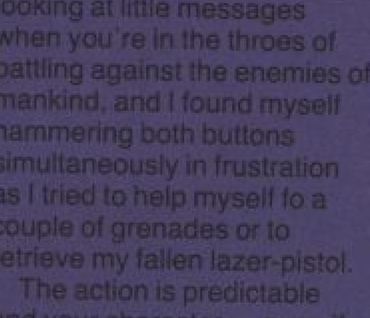
But as a game, as opposed to a novel game feature, I'm afraid Xenophobe doesn't quite cut it.

The controls are poorly thought out and a little clumsy. Your two fire buttons have a number of different functions including jumping, crouching, picking up and shooting which continually change: two small messages on your already-cramped third of the screen tell you what your left and right buttons will do at any given point in the game. In practise, of course, you don't really have much opportunity to be looking at little messages when you're in the throes of battling against the enemies of mankind, and I found myself hammering both buttons simultaneously in frustration as I tried to help myself to a couple of grenades or to retrieve my fallen lazer-pistol.

The action is predictable and your character — even if you do manage to master those buttons — still moves in an irritatingly uncoordinated shuffle. The monsters aren't anything special, the rooms are samey, and, once you've got over the split-screen, the graphics are a long way from state-of-the-art.

No, I can't see myself spending my allowance on *Xenophobe*: nice idea, boys, but a pity about the implementation.

Nick Kelly



◄ And let's be careful out there!

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	5
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	3
VALUE	5
OVERALL	4

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screen shot from CBM version

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NEXT

FREE FREE SUPPLEMENT

CU NEXT MONTH

FINAL FRONTIERS

The festive season starts early at CU — we give away a super free gift — every month between now and February. The December issue carries a 24 page colour supplement strapped to the front cover.

Final Frontiers is packed with final screen shots and comment on game endings. This is essential reading if you want to bluff about how amazing you are at computer games and the enormous number of games you've clocked. Impress your mates by dropping lines like "Yeah the final screen of *Impossible Mission* is really cool, loved the bit where . . . in fact it was almost as good as *Staff of Karnath* . . . bluff bluff bluff" Its the ultimate in coffee table supplements. Get it, or be, as the man says, square as a dice.



FREE SUPPLEMENT

Otherwise there'll be a selection of first reviews previews, compos and gratuitous insults. So be ready on November 26 with a chunky oncer in yur mitt or your newsagent will come and get you. CU too hip for Curly Watts (eh?)

Plus we bring you a great world exclusive in Arcades. Having been the first mag to tell you about *After Burner* and *Operation Wolf* we thought you'd like to know what else to look forward to in '88. We sent Mike Pattenden to the biggest coin op show on earth, the JAMMA in Tokyo. Look forward to a full report of some great games coming over from the Land of the Rising Sun.

MONTH

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1541 disk drive £150. 1520 colour printer, plotter £100. Both unused. Phone John on 0322 22701 evenings or weekends.

Amiga 500 hot new stuff, Phone Nick on 0923 662305 or write 47 Oakwood Road, Bricket Wood, St Albans, Herts AL2 3PZ.

The International Commodore User Club the special clubv for C16/Plus 4 user — is now in UK too. Members from the whole European continent will welcome you in this great club! For more information write to: ICUC, UK Service, A Wesener, Halwes 77, 0-4320 Hattingen W. Germany.

C64 for sale disk drive, printer, tape deck, joystick, 64 original games. worth £850 will sell for £400. Tel 0636 892822 after 6.30pm.

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C69 owner wants to swap software with people all over the world. Disk only. Please write or send disks to: Marcel van Vessem, Meidoornstraat 17, 5461 Ct, Veghel (N.B.), Holland.

ADVERTISEMENT INDEX

TOMMY'S TIPS



"And if it still won't load . . ."

Distortion

I am writing an alarm system for my Commodore 64, the program is almost ready. I tried to get the alarm siren noise, amplified through my old stereo system (Panasonic), and onto some speakers. The sound was highly distorted, using a lead from my Commodore to my stereo, with a mic left and right. Hope you can help.
Phillip D Hall
Bushey

The output from the 64's audio port is quite a bit higher than the very small signal normally prduced by a microphone. The result is that you are probably overloading the pre-amp in your stereo system, causing the distortion.

The way to overcome this is to use the 'line' inputs to your stereo, instead of the 'mic' inputs; these normally by-pass the pre-amp stage. If you don't have such an input, then you will have to reduce the volume of the output from the computer into the mic sockets, but this will not be as effective since you still won't have a matched input. You should be careful not to over-load mic inputs since you could possibly damage the stereo if done for any length of time.

Modem

What is the difference between an ordinary modem and a Compunet modem?

I have an ordinary modem and would like to connect to the Commodore 64. How would I do this and what software would I use?
D. Carrick
Camberley, Surrey

A Compunet modem will allow you to use the Compunet service, because the necessary ID code is built-in to the modem itself. Apart from this it is a straightforward 1200/75 baud modem which can also be used for other on-line access using this speed.

Other modems are available which will allow the use of different speeds, such as 300/300 as used by many Bulletin Boards (BBS), but whithout the built-in ID you cannot use these modems for logging on to Compunet even if they are the correct speed. All you need to connect a standard modem to the 64 is a correctly wired cable to connect to the User-port; most companies will supply a suitable cable for their modem, assuming it is 64 compatible. Since you don't say which modem you have I can't help you there.

As for software, again this needs to be compatible with the modem that you are using. Cartridges like the 'Mustang' are extremely useful since they allow Auto-dial, stored directories etc, but of course your modem must have auto-dial as well if these facilities are to be any use. I suggest you contact the supplier of your modem and see what software it is compatible with before you go ahead with any purchases.

Dim switch

I have had my Commodore 64 for nearly 3 years, The problem is when playing a game for about 1 hour the screen will jumble up and the power light goes very dim. After switching off and leaving for 3-4 hours and switching back on the computer is o.k but after another hour the same problem occurs.

If I switch off and then on after the problem occurs the power light will take a few moments to light up where normal computers their light comes on straight away.
Carl Goodman
Leicester

This could be caused by one of two things (or a combination of both). First, the power supply unit may be faulty, resulting in an under voltage after a period of use. Alternatively, a faulty component in the computer may suddenly 'break down', drawing an excessive current and thus causing an equivalent voltage drop in the rest of the circuitry.

If you have access to another power supply then you can possibly determine which it is by swapping to the alternative power pack immediately the problem occurs. If the computer immediately returns to normal then it is the power unit that is faulty, but if the same problem occurs then switch off again immediately to avoid damaging the borrowed power unit. Since the computer is out of warranty, I suggest you send both the computer and power supply to a repair company; my personal recommendation is Verran, especially now that any repair (excluding replacement power supply of course) is only £19.

The reason you should send both items is that with continued use in a faulty state the effect may have been to cause damage to the originally non-faulty unit. If any user suspects a fault with his or her computer/power supply, then get it checked. By continuing to use the faulty unit you could cause even more damage with a possible increase in repair costs!

Crash

I have just purchased *Powerball* from Mastertronic for my Plus/4. After loading and playing *well* into the game. It decides to crash. I do not understand why, but I bet you do.
Rachel Finn
London N19

The most likely answer is a fault in the program. This isn't necessarily a bug, although this is not beyond the bounds of possibility since it would be impossible to check every conceivable combination of paths through a program. It may equally be a fault introduced when the game was mass-copied. Either take it back to the dealer and exchange it (for a fresh copy of the same program of course).

In either case include details of exactly where you were, which page, score, no of lives etc, so that if it is a bug, the suppliers at least have a chance to check it out should they be so inclined. If it *is* a geniune bug that makes the game unplayable, then you should be able to get a refund, but you will only be able to prove this if all copies you get react in an identical fashion.

Monitors

I am thinking of upgrading from the C128 to the Amiga A500.

Also I intend on buying a monitor and I have decided on two of them, the Philips CM 8833 high res colour monitor and the A1081 colour monitor,

Now my problem is which of the two is the best, which is the cheapest, and what's the difference between the two of them
C.J. Viagos
Gibralter

There are in fact three possible monitors for the Amiga 500; the CBM A1081, the Phillips CM8833 and the Phillips



CM8852. There is little difference between the first two of these, mentioned in your letter. As for which is the cheapest, it very much depends on when and where you buy them. The list price of the A1081 is over £400, yet I have seen it advertised as low as £245 (although this was with the CBM voucher). Conversely, Silica Shop are advertising the CM8833 for £299, so if Commodore do not continue their discount on the A1081, then this would be the cheaper buy.

Both of these are med res (600 pixel resolution) monitors with a green screen option, but if you want slightly better resolution (700 pixels) then the CM8852 is well worth a look. This is being offered by Hi-Voltage at only £281 if bought at the same time as a 500 computer, which makes it very good value indeed since it has all the attributes of the CM8833 with better resolution. Silica Shop are on 01-309 1111 and Hi-Voltage are on 01-681 3022.

Assembler

● As a lucky owner of a Commodore 64, I've for about a year or so, gradually started to fancy Assembler programming more and more, but there are a few problems that puzzle my mind all the time.

It must be possible to store my programs in the $A000-BFFF (40960-49151) Basic ROM area, but these addresses seem impossible to alter. How??

What's currently the best assembler for my '64, and where is it available?
Hans I. Nerby
Raaholt, Norway

It is indeed possible to store m/code programs in the BASIC ROM area. What you have to realise is that when you POKE to these addresses (40960-49151) you are actually POKEing into the RAM which lies underneath the ROM, irrespective of whether the ROM is switched out or not. However, if you PEEK these addresses with the ROM still switched in, all you can see are the ROM values, not the values in the RAM. In order to run a m/code program (or recover data from this area) you must first switch out the BASIC ROM using POKE 1,54. Note that if you are going to load or create the m/code using a BASIC loader, then you must complete all the BASIC before switching out the ROM. Since you can happily POKE the code in with BASIC still enabled, this is not a problem. Likewise, you can use the KERNAL ROM area at 57344-65535 in the same way, but this time you must use POKE 1,53, which disables both BASIC and the KERNAL together. To get the ROMs back, use POKE 1,55.

Because you can read from the ROM and write to the RAM at the same time, it is possible to transfer parts of BASIC or the KERNAL into RAM without changing its address. Then when you switch out the ROMs you still have those parts of the system you might want, but still have the extra space to use.

As for assemblers, I much prefer the cartridge type, which saves having to reload every time you crash the computer! Supersoft do their Mikro Assembler on cartridge at £57-70, but if that's to expensive CBM's own disk based assembler package includes 2 monitors which will ist in high or low memory, all for around £25. Supersoft can be contacted at Winchester House, Canning Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex, England. HA3 7SJ, if you can't get their products from your local dealer.

Reverse

● Could you please answer these questions on the C16.
1 When printing on the screen using [RVS ON] is there any way to make the lettering not the same colour of the background?
2 Is it possible in the future to have a plug-in cartridge for the C16 to make the C16 speak?
3 What kind of disc drive is suitable for the C16?
4 Are ther any word proccessors for the C16?
Any help will be happily accepted
M. Farrell,
E. Kilbride

By using 'extended colour mode' it is possible to change the background colour of text to give up to 4 possible colours. The one restriction on this mode is that you are limited to the first 64 characters in the character set. The program at the end shows you an example.

While it is possible for someone might bring out a speech cartridge for the C16 in the future, I shouldn't hold your breath waiting! Since it was supported by Commodore for such a short time, there is unfortunately little incentive for companies to develop hardware/firmware products for the C16. As for disk drives, the 1541C will work quite happily and are the only drives for the C16 currently supported by CBM.

The best WP package for the C16 has to be the SCRIP/PLUS cartridge, since this doesn't take up any RAM memory; an important point with only 16K to play with, and it can be used with either tape or disk. It costs around £20 from ANCO (0322 522631)

```
10  scnclr
20  color 1,15,2
30  color 2,6,7
40  color 3,14,6
50  poke 65286, peek (65286) or 64
60  rem line 50 sets extended colour
    mode
65  print: print
70  print "this is";
80  print "A TEST OF <REV ON>";
90  print "extended COLOUR MODE
    <REV OFF>"
100 GetA$: if a$ <> "e" then 100
110 poke 65286, peek (65286) and
    191
120 rem line 110 resets colour mode
130 end
140 rem <rev on> = ctrl + rev on etc
```

Amiga query

● I'm thinking of buying an Amiga 500, but there are a couple of things I'd like to know.

First, is there a modulator for it, because I've only just bought a new TV.

Secondly could you tell me if there are any modems for the Amiga, and if there is could you give me some information on it.
Panos Aristidou,
Epsom, Surrey.

There is indeed a modulator for the Amiga 500, even if Commodore did design it to look like a house brick instead of putting it inside the case! It will cost you an extra £25 (+ Vat) and is called the A521 RF MODULATOR.

As for modems there is a slightly restricted choice because the Amiga itself is unable to deal with split-speed baud rates (underlining its American origins!). As a result you have to have software which can deal with the difference in rates either by the use of buffers or by using an extra hardware gizmo that does effectively the same thing. That means that you should confine yourself to the modems that are recommended for use with such programs (a classic example of the advantages of identifying the software you need first, and only then buying the hardware!). One of the more popular packages seems to be the Ruby-Comm Software (Y2 Computing) which will work with most of the WS range of modems (Miracle Technology) as well as several other common modems. Y2 Computing can be contacted on 0923 50161. There are cheaper alternatives, but whatever combination you finally decide on, you would be wise to choose the software first!

TOMMY'S TIPS

HOT SHOTS

By Mike Pattenden

Konichi Wa! As we say in the land of the Rising Sun. I'm so good to you. Out of the goodness of my heart I booked a flight on Japan Airlines and spent a week in **Tokyo** just so I could tell you all about the new wave of games heading west in '88. But just because I've been out of the country doesn't mean I don't know what's been going on behind my back . . .

● I was around for the PCW Show where the usual catalogue of mistakes and misdemeanours took place. My favourite is the **Microprose** story. The gung-ho sim company set up a treat for various of their buyers and distributors with an executive suite at a football match. Unfortunately they chose the QPR v Millwall *clash* in the Littlewoods Cup. Naturally it was a bloodbath with seats ripped up and heads cracked. Still they did get a chance to see our real national sport! By the way did anyone spot my picture in the Observer (18 Oct)? Look hard at the picture of Upton Park's South Bank in the Police recruitment ad and you'll see me meekly reading my programme. Fame, fatal fame . . .

●All those unfortunate people at the Microprose punch-up were no doubt sitting there wishing they had been invited to the prestige event of the Show, the **Firebird** dinner. A very select do it was too with entry by invite only. I could have gone with the Ed, but I was on a drinks ban for two weeks so there was no point. Those who couldn't go included The Edge's **Tim Langdell** who was turned away until he threatened to let Firebird have his programmers, and **Andrew Hewson** who was terribly downcast at the loss of Randy Claypluke and had to be consoled lest he throw thimself off a bridge and his death be everafter upon BT's hands.

● Not content with falling from grace at Loftus Road, **Microprose** embarassed themselves still further at the prestigious Software Publishers of America Conference, attended by some big UK houses including Firebird and Activision. Bill Stealey took the lead with a mammoth speech, supposedly on the topic of Marketing Strategy or the like, which he turned into an outrageous platform for his own company, much to the disgust of assembled EA, Epyx and Infocom bigwigs. UK MD of **Micropompous** Stuart Bell followed up by diverting his speech on the European Market into a similar topic. Activision's Rod Cousens was so outraged he leapt on the platform for his speech and blasted the sim company for their disgraceful conduct.

● That Sunday of the PCW show was a great day for British sporting achievements. Nigel Mansell won the Portuguese Grand Prix, the Europeans the Ryder Cup, but more importantly the UK team hammered the Yanks in the **Arcade Championships.** You might wish to know a little of the behind the scenes wrangling that inevitably goes hand in hand with such a momentous victory. Like the Yanks objecting fiercely that we used a different technique in the game and they should be given *another chance*! Whilst the tracksuits objected we raced away to victory.

Also how did Zzap's Julian Rignall make the UK team when he failed to qualify? Well Mastertronic's Arcadia people decided that it was bad for coverage so the teams were rearranged to squeeze him in. Aaawwwww! Isn't that nice. . . ?

● But what of the new range of arcade machines the Championship was played out on? Well the universal response of the players was the big thumbs down. *Roadwars* was considered so badly bugged (the screen occasionally jumped to the Amiga start-up screen) that it was unplayable and had to be well-nigh withdrawn for further work before it could be released, whilst *Rockford* was considered "poorer than the 64 version" in one CU player's words with an irritating self-destruct button handily placed right next to the fire button. Word has it that M'tronic are displeased with makers First Star to the point of getting heavy. . . .

● Enough bitching and onto some trivia. **Mark Strachan** of Domark was a Junior Irish Croquet Champ and a highly rated player of the well-known toffs game. Elite's **Bernard Dugdale** refused to believe this and found himself playing the Jeffrey Archer fan at Hurlingham, the croquet venue equivalent of Wimbledon. Bern has never been known to swing a mallet except in anger at a landlord. . . .

● Chief programmer at Ocean, **Gary Bracey** can stick his tongue out and twist it through 360° Bluuugh! Just to prove it he gave assembled guests at a recent Centresoft seminar party a demonstration. We think it's an illusion. If anyone else knows of software employees or bosses gifted with strange physical powers I'd like to hear about 'em.

It seems that the Bernard Dugdale wasn't too impressed by Gary Bracey's performance because he spent the rest of the evening winding Gary up, so much so that in the end the two were close to blows and had to be separated by Firebird's Sean 'Beefy' Brennan. . . . .

●Well that's all I can print this month, the rest of it is on the lawyer's cutting room floor. So until next time remember hotshotophiles — keep 'em peeled, or something. . .

▼ **US Tracksuit Team brought to their knees by CU arcade champs (and some others.)**





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